

# **TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

## Continuing Education



# **TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

Trainer Guide

Continuing Education Training

## **MATERIALS LIST**

### **TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

#### **Standard Room Set-Up**

Class roster/Sign-in sheets (morning and afternoon)

Name tents

White board markers

Flip chart set ups for small group work (easel, pad, markers)

Participant Manuals

PowerPoint Projector

Computer station with CPU, VCR, DVD, speakers

Laminated Copy of The Arkansas Practice Model – one per table (an extra copy is in with the handouts)

- **Handouts**
- **Participant manual**
- **Participant Resources**
- **PowerPoint**
- **DVD – Arkansas Transitional Youth Services**
- **One copy of the Transitional Youth Services Toolkit**
- **One copy of the FY13 Binder**
  - **Publication designed for Foster Youth, will be provided to all youth in care receiving Transitional Services.**

## TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES TRAINING

### NEED FOR TRAINING

Previously, supervisory staff, university field instructors, and some stakeholders were brought together for an opportunity to learn strategies to promote and support transitional planning in the field.

This training was prepared for DCFS to train Family Service Workers to engage youth in the process of transitional planning so that youth have a workable Transitional Life Plan that supports their life goals and promotes self-sufficiency.

There have been recent changes in federal and state laws that impact service delivery to youth in transition. A summary of those changes is included for brief review after introductions and overview of the agenda.

To accomplish the training objective, several separate training initiatives will be needed.

This training is considered Training Initiative 1 as outlined below:

#### Training Initiative 1:

- Concentrate on the function of the DCFS team creating successful transitions for youth in foster care to self-sufficiency. [What has to be done to promote youth to self-sufficiency and how is the DCFS team going to accomplish it?]
- Provide field staff with a tool kit that includes background information for working with teens with wide range of needs, including specific and detailed guides to accessing various services, programs, etc. [A new PUB 404 type document but more detailed.]

#### Training Initiative 2:

- Enhance broader participation from community providers and stakeholders in transitional planning and work. This will include community stakeholders such as Attorneys Ad Litem, CASA Volunteers, and local/regional providers.

#### Training Initiative 3:

- CHRIS documentation for Transitional Youth Services
- Overview of National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) overview (surveys begin Oct 1 by Federal law)



## TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES

Competencies Addressed		COA Standards Addressed
❖ 104-3	❖ 202-2	❖ G7.2
❖ 104-7	❖ 202-3	❖ G7.3.02 (c)
❖ 201-8	❖ 202-5	❖ G7.3.03 (a) (d)
❖ 201-1	❖ 202-7	❖ G7.3.04 (c)
❖ 202-1	❖ 306-5	❖ G7.3.07 (b) (c)

### Objectives: Participants will

- Renew Commitment to Serve Youth
- Review adolescent development
- Review strategies to engage youth in the planning process
- Address need for youth to experience real opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency
- Review principles of planning and conducting team meetings
- Overview of guidelines for structuring a team meeting
- Review skills needed to facilitate meetings
- Practice facilitating a transitional life plan team meeting
- Practice developing a Life Plan as a team

### Materials

- Name tents
- Participant Manuals
- Handouts
- PowerPoint Presentation
- DVD – Transitional Youth Services (MS-made copy)
- Trainer Resources
- Stickers (optional activity)
- Participant Resource Toolkit
- Foster Club's Transition Toolkit (Reference Copy)
- FY13 Binder (Reference Copy)

## SECTION I – WORKING WITH ADOLESCENTS

### A. Introduction

#### PowerPoint to accompany

Introduce yourself. Have participants introduce themselves.

Remind participants to sign in (am and pm) in order to receive credit.

There is a Table of Contents on page 2.

Review the Need for Transitional Youth Services Training Summary and the Training Objectives and Competencies on page 3-4 of the Participant Manual.

Review the Agenda for the day on page 5 of the Participant Manual.

#### TRAINER NOTE – Consider this:

- How can we help workers develop insight and understanding into the concept of permanence?
- How can we help workers to have the concept of permanence ready and available in their skill sets to influence decision-making in transitional life planning?

### Brief Review of Fostering Connections, NYTD and A.C.A. § 9-27-363 Foster Youth Transition

#### B.

Pages 6 of the Participant Manual provides summaries of the major points related to the federal and state laws.

The requirements for Transitional planning are more than the latest ‘new idea’ from central office. The requirements stem from federal and state laws.

### C. Brief Overview of Differences between the “traditional” Transitional Plan in CHRIS and the Life Plan

**The question arises, “Are there two transitional plans now?” The answer is yes and no.**

The “traditional” Transitional plan is required by law and is part of the Case Plan within CHRIS. This document is considered the “beginning” of documentation for court submission.

The Life Plan is considered as the Youth’s Plan, requiring active involvement and participation from the youth in its creation and implementation. It is shorter term – focusing on the next 1, 3, or 6 months (6 months at the very most). It should be discussed and updated frequently. The Life Plan should serve as the foundation for the more formal, court required Transition Plan.

**D. ATTENTION! – The Heart of the Matter – DVD of Arkansas’ Youth in Transition**

**Show the MS produced DVD – Transitional Youth Services. This video is homemade and a little “rough” but asks real youth in Arkansas about real issues they face in trying to transition out of foster care into self-sufficiency and increasing independence. Trainers don’t have to show this but it does get the attention of the participants.**

**For a discussion on this video, ask for comments and thoughts from the group, then tie those comments back to the idea that the team of people working with adolescents in foster care must work with the youth and with each other to address the young person’s needs in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, and life connections.**

**E. Icebreaker - Reflection – Remember when?**

**For some, adolescence was a while ago. For others, it hasn’t been that long ago. How we perceive a group will impact how we respond to the group. To**

**help us remember what it was like to be an adolescent, we are going to do a brief exercise.**

At table groups, have participants answer and discuss with each other the sentences that appear on **page 8 of the Participant Manual – Icebreaker.**

### Discussion

In the exercise of completing the sentences, we've reflected on our own experiences, memories, or important turning points in our lives that have helped to shape who we are today. We learned important skills that we need to function in our "grown up" lives from a variety of people.

Most of us did not grow up without the help and support of people around us. Some people may have been autonomous at an early age and "raised" themselves, but most of us depended on others, including our friends, to support us during the transition period from adolescence into young adulthood.

Throughout the day, we will be reinforcing the idea of teaming with youth for permanency. This approach to practice involves working with youth to build a future for them. And it is not just the FSW and Coordinator working with the youth. It is essential that we move to a TEAM approach to transitional planning, primarily because the scope and complexity of the needs of youth moving into adulthood require more resources, time and energy than one worker or coordinator have available.

No one person can be all things to a young adult entering the 'real world'.

***We must assist youth to build and maintain their own support network.***

Throughout life, we are faced with learning new skills, negotiating new environments, maturing and growing. All of us must be able to transition into the next phase of his life with meaning and purpose.

***We continue to need people to help us, teach us, support us forever.***

And just like we need a number of people for support, we will need more than one opportunity to create and develop a good (or even adequate) Life Plan. It will not be accomplished in a one hour staffing format. There may need to be several Life Plan Team meetings with a mixture of attendees to address all of the areas within the Transitional Life Plan:

Education

Employment

Health

Housing

Life Connections

**TRAINER NOTE:** This afternoon, we are going to conduct a mock meeting to help a youth create a Transitional Life Plan. Everyone will have a role. Consider going ahead and getting volunteers for the roles of the youth and the caseworker who will “run” the meeting.

Provide these 2 volunteers with copies of the Scenario for **Transitional Life Plan Meeting (in Handouts)** and ask them to look over the information. There will be more planning time nearer to the activity.

IF you have difficulty getting a volunteer to act as the caseworker facilitating the meeting or if you have a very hesitant volunteer, there is a **draft script available in the Trainer Resource section** that you can share with the volunteer ahead of time. It doesn't include an *entire* Transitional Planning meeting, but provides enough information to give the volunteer an idea of how to start off the meeting, set the tone, keep the meeting youth-focused and flowing well.

There are three other scenarios with different characteristics, needs, etc if the Trainer would prefer to use one of those. However, there aren't draft

scripts of those scenarios to share with the volunteer who will be running the meeting.

We are going to talk about the planning and development of the team meeting and the Life Plan more in a little while.

FIRST, let's review the characteristics of the group we are working with.

### C. Brief review of development

It's important in our work with youth to remember where they are developmentally so we need to review the impact that development and change has on the adolescent.

Trainer asks the group, "What are the key developmental tasks that teenagers are dealing with?"

Jot down on the white board a few of the tasks that the group comes up with.

Development is taking place physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. In a nutshell, adolescent development is all about change.

Go over the information on page 9-10 in the Participant manual on the tasks of adolescence

A few notes/questions for discussion on these tasks:

#1

We may be looking at grown bodies, mature faces, facial hair, breasts, and muscles while the teen still acts childish or seems unable to move into planning and decision making. Or, we may be looking at small bodies that still look pre-teen although the teen is hypermature and has fairly good planning skills.

#2

How may the ability to engage in 'what if' thinking be impacted by a history of abuse or neglect? Ability to plan varies based on individual.

#4

Are youth in foster care different from the norm in their risk-taking? Can't generalize, must be taken individually.

#6

Ability to empathize often begins with peers or siblings and then translates to broader group, including caregivers.

#7

How will frequent or abrupt changes in living arrangements, schools, etc. affect this task?

#8

How are youth in foster care viewed by school/treatment providers/agency?  
How will multiple placements affect this task?

#9

Job, driving, caring for personal items – how are these activities different for youth in foster care?

#10

Developmentally, adolescents are **renegotiating** their relationships with parents, caregivers and becoming more independent and autonomous. (This task has been described as separating from parents, although more recently, literature is referring to this as renegotiating.)

Given the many, far-reaching changes going on, we know that communicating with adolescents can be one of the most challenging and frustrating tasks we undertake.

Go over **Communicating with Teens on page 11 of the Participant manual.**

#### **D. Energizer: Face to Face Learning Opportunity – Quick Paired Discussion**

**Instruct everyone in the group to stand up, cross the room and find another participant to pair with.**

**Have each participant identify two aspects of adolescent development that the participant finds most challenging when working with youth.**

**Then, have participants identify two strategies for addressing these challenges.**

**Next, have each participant in the pair identify and share with their partner two approaches for communicating with adolescents that they have found most helpful or effective.**

**There is a place on page 12 of the Participant Manual to take notes, jot down ideas.**

**AHA!** Ask learners to share with the larger group some of the strategies or tips they discussed!

It's important to remember that development is very individualized and the youth we work with may follow very different paths toward adulthood. These youth may be accelerated in some areas and seriously lagging in others. Changes in living arrangements, schools, peer groups, and support groups will impact the adolescent's development across domains.

Most of us will become frustrated working with young adults at some point! Remember that others may be having similar frustrations. Seek out and brainstorm strategies for overcoming these frustrations and difficulties with our co-workers and supervisors.

Have the participants return to their tables.



**E. Learn from our mistakes (page 13 in the Participant Manual)**

Most of us, at some point in our lives, have thought:

- Mistakes are BAD!
- We must avoid failure!

Mistakes are a natural part of life. Failures are stepping stones to success.

**Our challenge in working with young adults is to recognize the need for adolescents to experience increasing increments of independence and the accompanying successes and failures in order to develop self-determination.**

Growing up or even now, did you (or do you) ever hear these statements?

- I told you it wouldn't work.
- Why don't you try harder?
- Just let me do it for you, it's quicker (or easier)
- I should just do it myself, at least I know it will be done right.
- Why did you drop the ball? Miss the shot? Strike out? Miss the goal? You had a clear shot, you had it! (any sport-related example)

Some suggestions for using mistakes as teachable moments:

- Mistakes are a natural part of life.
  - The more responsibility we have, the more likely we *will* make mistakes.
  - Failures are stepping stones to success.
  - We learn by experimenting.
- Don't waste time trying to justify your mistakes.
  - Don't look for blame

- If you make a mistake that harms someone else, apologize with dignity.
  - Apologize in person (if possible)
  - Once, then move on
- Understand why the mistake occurred
  - Avoid repeating same mistakes

We learn by experimenting; mistakes and failure can be important parts of our learning process. Einstein flunked grade-school mathematics. Edison tried over 9,000 kinds of filaments before he found one that would work in a light bulb. Walt Disney went bankrupt five times before he built Disneyland.

**Trainer Note:**

**Share a brief story of something you failed at, appropriate to your audience, not TOO much.**

We all have the experience of failure, of making mistakes.

Ask, do we hold youth in foster care to a different standard than youth in “normal” circumstances are held to?

- Make a mistake and they are moved out of a placement
- Rebellious behavior or questioning authority can result in psychiatric hospitalizations
- May have very limited opportunities to explore the world on their own due to liability issues, unrealistic limits set by agency, state.

Use the analogy of learning to drive. Think of adolescence as the “learner’s permit” leading up to adulthood. The young person makes mistakes, has opportunities for correction, is supervised. As a young person becomes increasingly skilled at “driving” or making decisions, less rigorous supervision is needed, more independence can be given, etc.

### TRAINER NOTE:

Show the PowerPoint slides, Famous Failures, for a quick energizer. This is a multiple choice quiz. Involve the whole class.

## F. Engage!

There is a list of Practice Tips for Engaging Youth in Planning on page 14 in the Participant Manual.

Talking with and getting teens to interact with adults can be like pulling teeth! They are so irritable. They are so prickly. They can be so difficult!

Adults have to be creative in their approaches to talking and working with youth. One key discussion point in engaging youth is that it cannot be an “isolated” event. If the adult doesn’t routinely attempt to engage and draw out the adolescent, if the adult dismisses the youth, talks down to the teen, it will be a challenge to engage the youth when it’s time to do transitional planning.

General strategies to get youth talking and involved in their own planning process include (on pages 15-16 in the Participant Manual):

- Let them know you are able to JUST LISTEN (free of advice, judgment, lecturing)
- Remember your active listening skills
- Don’t take over the problem
- Show respect for their ideas, opinions (even if you don’t agree)
- Keep their confidence (if safe)
- Watch for opportunities when the teen is ready.
  - Youth want to talk at odd times – blurt out as leaving, late at night
  - NOT first thing in the morning!
  - Not on busiest days
- Small talks often rather than one huge talk

- Avoid asking a lot of questions
  - Especially “why” questions
- Don’t get defensive when they make critical remarks about adults
- Apologize when you’re wrong
- Provide feedback in straightforward way, but don’t keep repeating
- Give clear messages (use I messages)
- Talk about yourself some, but not too much!
- Give them lots of praise and positive feedback when they do speak up and get involved, active.
- Others?

Activities include:

- Do something fun and relaxing with youth before a planning session
  - For example, play a game of Twenty Questions with youth as the player. General rules for 20 Questions: The player thinks of something and the others ask questions to try to guess what it is. In the original game, the player could only answer yes, no, maybe, doubtful, irrelevant, etc. If others haven’t guessed in 20 questions, player wins.
- Ask them to make a short video (most cameras and cell phones have video function)
- Have youth work on Life Planning ideas in pairs or small groups
- Have youth prepare a presentation or put on a skit to show what goals, dreams, plans are
- Have youth write a story or poem about his/her future
- Others?

## **G. Small group activity**

### Purpose

To identify helpful strategies for participants to use to engage young people more effectively in the planning process.

### Method

Quickly move the group into a quick small group activity to SUGGEST ways to engage young people in the planning process that they have used.

Ask each small group to share among themselves 2-3 ideas for getting youth talking and actively participating.

### Discussion

There does not need to be a “formal” discussion of this activity. Having the small groups discuss the strategies they use to engage youth will help to solidify the concept of actively involving the young person and the activities discussed so far. You may have class quickly share any novel, creative ideas that they heard at their tables that haven’t been discussed.

Next, we are moving into information to help the worker, coordinator and supervisor to plan and hold a meaningful meeting with the right people at the table, with ample youth input, with a variety of resources to assist the young person.

This is truly an opportunity to widen the circle of potential supports for the youth.

## **SECTION II – PLANNING AND MANAGING MEETINGS**

### **A. Pre-Planning - Life Connections: Who to invite?**

**Trainer, ask the group:**

“What are some reasons why adolescents react negatively to our attempts to discuss people in their lives who might be lifelong connections or provide some level of permanence?”

OR

“What are some of your experiences when you have tried to talk to young people about people in their lives who might be lifelong connections or provide some level of permanence?”

Some reasons for their reluctance may include:

- Have had prior bad experience with a seemingly “permanent” placement/adoption that didn’t work out
- Have friends/acquaintances who have bad experiences with a seemingly “permanent” placement/adoption that didn’t work out
- Continue to think, feel, believe their lives will return to the way it was prior to coming into foster care, reunification with birth family, return to “normal”
- Others?

As adults we “know” that youth need permanence in their lives and in their relationships, it may be difficult to understand when a young person reacts negatively or unenthusiastically to our attempts to discuss people in their lives, lifelong connections, and potential permanency connections.

When it is time to sit down with the young person to identify potential connections, you might say something like:

“I’m going to go through your record very thoroughly to prepare for the Life Planning meeting. Do you want me to look for someone’s contact information? Is there someone you remember that you would like for me to find in the record?”

**How do we identify people who need to be invited to the life planning meeting, team meeting? \***

For some youth, there will be no problem with identifying people to be involved in planning. For some youth, your job may need to be to help the young person narrow down the people to a manageable number who can get work done.

For other youth, there may be fewer options. They may perceive that there is almost no one to involve in the planning process. This section is designed to address these youth who have more difficulty identifying people to be a part of their planning process, and by extension, to be a part of their plan.

*\*Talking with Youth: Preparing Everyone for Permanent Family Connections,  
Robert G. Lewis, M.Ed., M.S.W*

Identify important people in the youth's support network

- ✓ who can be life connections,
- ✓ who help provide a sense of belonging,
- ✓ who are committed to the young person, and
- ✓ who can be in a mutual relationship.

The following ideas are included in the Participant manual.

Brainstorm with the young person to help identify potential permanency connections (found on **page 17 in the Participant Manual**).

- ❖ You might suggest to the youth that if they were to assemble a dinner party with the most important people in their lives, who would they invite?
- ❖ Another idea is the Advisory Board or a Board of Directors (not to tell them what to do, but to advise and support)
- ❖ You can consider constructing an Ecomap or Ideamap with the young person.

- ❖ People Finder Quiz (page 18 in the Participant Manual) might help a young person to identify potential supports. Send this home with the teen to spend time coming up with some answers.

- Extended family and fictive kin.
- Who was there in the beginning?
- Someone who attended a prior planning meeting or staffing
- Anyone who called for or came looking for the child.
- Past caregivers.
- People who have called asking about the youth.
- Past significant professionals.
- Etc.

Hopefully, after the pre-planning meeting with the young person, you have a list of potential invitees.

The next steps are to plan the meeting, invite the people, hold the meeting and create a Life Plan.

## **B. Meeting Facilitation Tips**

Go over general Meeting Facilitation Tips found in the Participant manual on pages 19-20.

- ❖ Be prepared to keep group task-focused
- ❖ Encourage creative thinking
- ❖ Know how to build consensus
- ❖ Keep everyone involved
- ❖ Create safe and supportive environment
- ❖ Be patient!



- ❖ Use attending and active listening skills
  - Appropriate eye contact
  - Attentive body language
  - Vocal variation and interest
  - Attend to other people's body language cues
  - Listen and watch for underlying meaning of messages
  - Conveying understanding of total message
- ❖ Blend assertiveness with tact
- ❖ Recognize and deal with disruptive behavior
- ❖ Know yourself! What situations or agenda items might you find difficult to handle? Develop a plan or strategy to address if arises.
- ❖ Have a Plan B for when things do not go as planned.
- ❖ Try to "level the playing field".
  - An Area Manager, an attorney, and a therapist all bring different dynamics into the meeting and can upset the balance of "power". Actively engage all members and remind group members of the purpose of the meeting – make a meaningful Life Plan for Youth.
- ❖ If meeting is veering away from agenda or time frame, ask group's "permission" or input about the deviation.
- ❖ When it appears that the item being discussed is not being resolved or there are too many options to consider, try these steps:
  - Reflect back to the group what is going on, e.g., we seem to be having a hard time coming to an agreement about housing.
  - Present the options, e.g., we can continue to discuss until we reach agreement or we could agree to table this and move on to the next topic and come back to it later.
  - Ask what the group wants to do, e.g., what does the group want to do.

**C. OPTIONAL: More Facilitation Tips – Review Tips for Managing Participant Behaviors and Small Group Activity**

### TRAINER NOTE:

If you have a small group and time allows, you can spend time in this small group activity to explore responses to difficult behaviors that may arise in a meeting. You will need the **Handout for the activity What Do You Do?**

There are additional **materials on facilitation tips available in the Resources section.**

Trainer will need sheets of stickers for each participant to use to “vote” on best ideas generated.

### Purpose

To identify strategies for handling various situations that may come up in groups.

### Method

Divide the following topics among small groups. Have the groups generate ideas for responding to the situations using an idea or topic map. Have groups work on flip charts.

An idea map is a visual aid that can help learners to creatively explore ideas quickly, where ideas lead to new ideas and multiple responses can be identified.

An idea map has a similar format to an EcoMap. An **example of an Idea Map is provided in the Trainer Resource section.**

After the groups have a chance to generate possible responses to the situations, provide each participant with a sheet of stickers.

Rotate groups around the room to other flip charts to review other groups' ideas and add ideas to those previously identified. Encourage participants to put

stickers by those ideas, strategies that they think will be most effective (vote for favorites.)

**TRAINER NOTE:**

Trainer will need to review idea maps to check for appropriateness of suggestions and respond accordingly. Watch for:

- suggestions that may work to stop a behavior but may be condescending to an attendee (cause the person to “lose face”), are too heavy handed
- suggestions that seem negative, sarcastic, inappropriate for group

The topics are:

1. One person keeps “hogging” the meeting agenda. He or she has a comment or opinion about every single item.
2. Someone changes the subject before the item being discussed has been fully dealt with.
3. You are behind schedule and the group cannot seem to move off a certain agenda item.
4. Participants are directing all comments back to you (the leader) and not really talking to each other.
5. Participants are talking about the youth to each other in the third person rather than directly to the youth, e.g., He is not doing his homework.
6. Some participant keep responding with “Yes, but...”
7. The meeting is going on for a long time and participants are tired and beginning to get grumpy.

8. Someone raises an issue that is going to be addressed later in the meeting.
9. Your supervisor disagrees with your summary of an item that has just been discussed.
10. The attorney ad litem (or some other attendee with whom you have to continue to work) frequently interrupts you during the meeting.
11. One attendee seems to be particularly condescending toward the youth.
12. Despite numerous attempts, one attendee will not contribute.

**OPTIONAL SECTION ENDS**

## D. PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING

**TRAINER NOTE:** Ask large group to brainstorm things they need to do to get ready for a transitional planning meeting.

Record these on a whiteboard or flipchart.

Remind participants that this is NOT a staffing. The “tone” of this meeting should NOT be the same as a “staffing”. The goal for this meeting is to be youth-driven and youth-centered.

Follow with a review of materials on the **Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting** in the **Participant manual on pages 21-22.**

## PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING

- ✓ Work with youth to identify who will be invited to the meeting and assist the youth in sending out personal invitations
- ✓ Send a blank copy of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement with the Invitation to Family Centered Meeting - CFS-590 (Staffing notice)
  - **TRAINER NOTE:** Yes, it is ironic that we use a “staffing notice” to invite participants to the Transitional Life Planning meeting and we want to try to avoid a “staffing” type meeting. Remind participants that the **ACTUAL** title of the CFS-590 is Invitation to Family-Centered Meeting.
- ✓ Send an explanatory letter or note along with the Invitation to Family Centered Meeting and blank copy of the Transitional Life Plan and include information relevant to the invitee.
  - For someone who the youth wishes to invite to a part of the meeting, share the general time frame with the person.
  - For someone who needs to be at the entire meeting, a brief explanation that this is a planning meeting and may take some time.
  - Inform the invitee that the planning meeting will be Youth-Centered
  - Prepare the participants:
    - to introduce himself/herself,

- to say something positive about the youth, and
  - to say something about how long he or she has worked with youth
- ✓ Follow-up with the invitees with letter, email, telephone call.
- ✓ Plan for meeting details
  - Arrange for meeting space (consider someplace other than the DCFS office, if possible)
  - Plan for drinks, snacks
  - Paper, pen for each person present
  - Provide name badges or name tents
    - Use address labels for name badges
    - Use card stock for name tents
  - Plan to have a sign-in sheet (this is particularly important the more people who are invited and if people will be coming and going)
- ✓ Address transportation needs and day care arrangements
- ✓ Identify someone who will be able to take detailed notes (could be someone involved in the meeting or could be a co-worker)
- ✓ Prepare to facilitate the meeting
  - Thoroughly review case file and make notes for your own use
  - Review meeting facilitation pointers if needed
  - Set up pre-meeting conference with supervisor
    - Identify desired outcomes
    - Brainstorm strategies to address potential barriers within meeting, e.g., “negative” people, known conflicts among participants
  - Set up pre-meeting conference with Transitional Services Coordinator
  - Set up room so that all invitees can see one another easily (consider Youth at head of table)
- ✓ Prepare materials
  - Agenda
  - Copies of Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - Copies of confidentiality statement, if needed

- Sign-in sheet
- Copies of other materials, as needed
- Ground rules or Guidelines (either posted or copies)
- ✓ Prepare the youth
  - Work with Youth to understand the process and structure for the meeting
  - Give youth copy of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement to begin making a draft of what he/she would like to address
  - Encourage Youth to prioritize areas, items to be discussed
    - Work with Youth to identify strategies to tackle “difficult” or “sticky” areas
- ✓ Determine how much youth understands about permanence
  - Be prepared to discuss permanence (broadly defined)
  - Concentrate on connections and belongingness
  - Remember to address permanence on an ongoing basis and at naturally occurring opportunities – don’t relegate discussion of permanence to a “staffing” situation

The following information provides a structure or format for the Transitional Life Plan team meeting. Review the following guidelines for the meeting and share with the youth (in a format that is age-appropriate.) This is on page 23 of the Participant Manual and is a Handout. Have participants review this information BEFORE the team meeting.

**E. Guidelines for Structuring the Transitional Life Plan Team meeting**

- I. Welcome (Set the tone) and Introduction
  - a. Thank everyone for coming
  - b. Clear statement of the purpose of the meeting
  - c. Youth-centered approach
  - d. Positive statement about youth
  - e. Request youth to identify people in the room and then each person can introduce him/herself (have name tents)
  - f. Each person present should be ready to make a positive statement regarding the youth
  - g. Orientation to the meeting location, if needed
  - h. Review the process (or flow) of the meeting
  - i. Guidelines for the discussion
- II. Information Gathering and Sharing
  - a. Brainstorming begins
  - b. Maintain focus on present and near future (1-3-6 months)
  - c. Maintain positive tone of staffing (meeting)
  - d. Ensure that topics are discussed thoroughly
- III. Documenting the Plan
  - a. Capture the information from the brainstorming into the categories of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - b. Notes on topics that need to be addressed further in future meetings
  - c. Maintain focus on the present and near future (1-3-6) months
  - d. Remember that the plan is subject to change
  - e. Agree on tasks and timeframes
- IV. Closing the Meeting
  - a. Review the specifics of the plan (Who, What, When, Where, How)
  - b. Discuss follow-up details (who will check in with whom about progress)
  - c. Meeting planner and/or Life Plan with own tasks
  - d. Distribution of the plan?
  - e. Collect feedback from those present about the staffing
  - f. Thank everyone for coming
- V. Monitoring and Follow-up
  - a. Set up mechanism and time table to check in with team members to follow-up
  - b. Immediately document team meeting results



## SECTION III – THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING

The following activity will take up most of the rest of the training day.

### A. Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting – Structured Experiential Learning Activity

#### Purpose

The group's tasks for this activity are

1. to plan a Transitional Life Plan meeting, and
2. to create/develop a Life Plan for a youth based on the information contained in the scenario provided as a Handout.

The Transitional Life Plan Staffing will address specific areas within

- Education,
- Employment,
- Health,
- Housing, and
- Life Connections

#### Set-up

If possible, conduct this activity in a conference room. If no conference room is available or is not large enough, consider arranging a portion of the training room into a conference room for this exercise.

If the class is small (7-10 participants total), plan to have each class participant act as a member of the Transitional Team. Go through the meeting once, discuss, allow feedback, observations, etc. Then, have the “team” go back through the meeting again and make changes, corrections based on the feedback. Another option would be to have participants change roles and conduct the meeting again with another person facilitating, another person acting as youth, etc.

If the class is large, plan to have two “teams” or groups practice the Transitional Team Meeting. Each team or group will have a participant assigned as youth, worker, supervisor, etc. Each group will have a turn to conduct a mock meeting.

The first group to conduct the meeting will be observed by the second group. The second group can then provide feedback. The second team will then be observed by the first team and will be given feedback at the conclusion of the mock meeting. Remind the groups to keep their feedback positive and helpful!

Provide each participant with a blank copy of the Transitional Life Plan.

### Method

Assign (or ask for volunteers) to play the various roles.\*

The roles are:

- Youth
- Worker
- Transitional Services Coordinator
- Supervisor
- University Field Trainer
- Other participants identified by youth, such as
  - a. current Foster Care provider or care giver,
  - b. significant life connections,
  - c. birth family member (if appropriate),
  - d. Attorney ad Litem,
  - e. therapist,
  - f. CASA,
  - g. school representative.

\*The other participants will be dependent on the scenario and on ***whom the youth identifies as needing to be there.***

Each team will

1. read the scenario (Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting Scenario),
2. as a small group, plan and prepare for the meeting, and
3. engage in a structured experiential learning opportunity (what used to be called a Role Play – shhh!)

The group (or groups) is/are to use the following materials to help prepare for the Transitional Life Plan Meeting.

- Preparing for the Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting (pp. 21-22)
- Guidelines for Structuring Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting (p. 23)
- Blank Copy of Transitional Life Plan and Agreement (Handout)
- More Meeting Facilitation Tips (in Participant Resource section)
- Draft script for Caseworker Volunteer – if desired (in Trainer Resource section)

ENCOURAGE the groups to make the Mock meeting as realistic as possible. What do they need? Copies of materials? Pitcher of water, cups?

**Trainer Note: There is a detailed “script” of a Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting in the Trainer Resource section. The script can be used as one guideline for how a Team meeting might unfold.**

Ask participants to turn to page 24 in the Participant Manual – Transitional Life Plan and Agreement

The Transitional Life Plan

- ❖ Serves as the foundation of the transitional plan
- ❖ Active involvement of the youth
- ❖ Describes current level of functioning
- ❖ Looking at shorter term

**This document must be completed and in place no later than the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday or within 90 of entering care if youth is 17 at time of entering care. (Best practice mandates that planning begin much earlier!)**

The meeting should define specific Goals/Activities/Team Members and Dates for our youth in the scenario in the areas of

1. Education,
2. Employment,
3. Health,
4. Housing, and
5. Life Connections.

After the first team has conducted a meeting, allow for feedback, observations, and discussion based on the second group's observation.

Discussion:

Discussion about the process of the meeting or activity:

If the class is small enough for only one group:

What went well?

Was the meeting youth-centered? Youth-driven?

What would they like to take back and incorporate into their own practice?

If the class is large enough to warrant two groups:

What went well?

What did each team like about the other team's meeting?

Was the meeting youth-centered? Youth-driven?

What would they like to take back and incorporate into their own practice?

Discussion about the content of the meeting or activity:

What is the focus for the next 1-3-6 months? Have the areas of Health, Housing, Education, Employment, and Life Connections been addressed?

How broadly were the areas of health, housing, education, employment and life connections defined?

- Were participants looking at these categories only in terms of when the youth leaves foster care?
- Were the participants looking at these categories in terms of what needs to happen to fully develop and nurture each of these areas now and in the immediate future?

Some suggestions to discuss with the group:

Whom did Ben wish to invite? What if he actually sent invitations?

What ideas were generated to prepare Ben for the meeting?

Is meeting planned for after school?

Did anyone think to provide food?

Are there ideas for meeting places other than a DHS office?

Does the plan rely too heavily on only one or two staff or support people?

Has an array of resource providers been included in the planning process?

Life Connections are CRITICAL to successful transition for youth.

- What creative ideas were discussed to nurture Ben's relationship with his sister?
- What about other potential Life connections for Ben?

## **SECTION IV – TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES RESOURCES**

**Go over the Participant Resource section that was put together by the**

**Transitional Youth Services program. Point out the FYI3 Binders that each youth in TYS receives. Also, reference Foster Club's Transition Toolkit that each county office is supposed to get multiple copies of.**

## SECTION V – SYNTHESIS AND WRAP-UP

Transitional Planning is supported by the Arkansas Model of Practice ([table copies available for reference](#)).

That model supports the team approach and emphasizes youth have access to array of resources.

- ❖ Permanency planning is ongoing and changing
- ❖ Lifelong Connections are KEY

## **Dionne**

Dionne is a 16 year old female who has been in foster care since age 11. Dionne came into foster care as a result of sexual abuse by her mother's live-in boyfriend. Dionne was sexually abused by this man beginning at age 6. She disclosed the abuse when she began to worry about getting pregnant and her mother's boyfriend would not allow her to have friends and do things outside the home.

The mother did not leave the boyfriend at that time. Fairly regular contact has been maintained between Dionne and her mother. The mother and boyfriend are no longer together. She is married to a different man and they have a 3 year old son. At the time that Dionne came into care, relative placement was not considered because no relatives were identified or came forward. Dionne says she has no relatives outside of her mother. There has been no contact with her biological father since she was 4. Dionne has never returned to live in the mother's home, even on a trial basis. However, Dionne is convinced that once she leaves foster care, she will be able to return to her mother's home and re-connect with this family.

Dionne has moved countless times during her stay in foster care. She has been in therapeutic foster care for the last year and a half. Dionne has a history of running away. She is sexually active and is considered to be promiscuous. Most recently, she was involved with the 29 year old son of the foster parents' neighbor. She has a history of alcohol abuse since age 12 and drug abuse since age 13. She has been in inpatient treatment three times since age 14 related to substance abuse and major depression. She has a history of self-mutilation. She rubs holes into her skin using pencil erasers and sometimes cuts herself with razors. She has attempted suicide at least once using alcohol and antidepressants.

Dionne's school performance varies. When she works and applies herself, she maintains a B-C average. Right now, she is not working at school and her grades, and has C's or D's. She has said she wants to be a nurse or dental assistant.

For purposes of transitional planning, what areas need to be addressed with and by Dionne in the next 3-6 months?

How will the TEAM work with Dionne in relation to her life connections and in defining specific and details plans to work on in education and employment? What skills will Dionne need to manage her health and housing?

## Jaret

Jaret is 15 and lives in a therapeutic foster home with his younger sister who is 13. Jaret and his sister came into care a year ago when their mother died. Jaret has juvenile diabetes and ADHD. His sister is mildly mentally retarded and has speech and language delays.

Jaret has had difficulty adjusting to being in foster care and his behavior has been out-of-control and extreme at times. His ADHD is better controlled in the last 3 months since being put on a medication delivered with a patch. His diabetes is well-controlled since being in foster care. He is intelligent, funny, and said to be "charming". He is generally well-liked by his foster family and teachers.

Jaret's caseworker has not been able to find any relatives who might be possible resources as life connections for Jaret. Jaret needs to be with his sister, but his therapeutic foster mother has said that he cannot continue to live with her if he has further "episodes". Jaret insists that he must remain with his sister to help take care of her. The sister is "mild" and compliant and causes no problems at home or school.

Jaret is an A-B student and seems to enjoy school. He is good at history and science and particularly likes art and music. Jaret has some artistic ability for drawing. He has expressed interest in mechanic work. He is active in the church youth group where the foster family attends church and is involved in the youth choir.

For purposes of transitional planning, what areas need to be addressed with and by Jaret in the next 3-6 months?

How will the TEAM work with Jaret in relation to his life connections and in defining specific plans for his education? What skills will Jaret need to acquire to manage his health?



## Sierra

Sierra just turned 17 and has been in foster care for 2 years and currently resides in a group home. She was in a shelter and then one foster home before moving into the group home. Her parents were cooking and using meth for 2½ years before they were busted. Sierra recently disclosed to her counselor that she is the one who turned her parents in.

Sierra has 3 younger siblings, a brother who is 16, a brother who is 12, and a 10 yo sister. The 10 yo sister and 12 yo brother are in a family foster home together and have been in the same home for the last year. Her 16 yo brother has moved 8 times in the past 1½ years and stays in trouble.

Sierra talks about her younger siblings frequently and asks to see them every time she sees her caseworker. The 2 youngest appear to be in a stable placement. Sierra is very worried about her 16 yo brother.

Sierra is a sophomore in school and is passing most subjects. She is failing math. She says she wants to finish high school and go to college and become a counselor. She also talks about getting out of foster care when she turns 18 and moving in with her boyfriend (who lives in the same group home.)

Sierra's father and mother have not been able to maintain sobriety for more than 3 months. The state is pursuing termination of parental rights. There are some relatives on both sides who may be potential life connections. The maternal grandmother has expressed some interest in the children but is not in good health. The father has one sister who lives in another state who may be a resource. The paternal grandmother has said she would consider taking the 2 youngest children.

Sierra has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder since coming into care. She could not tolerate lithium and is currently on Depakote. She has gained a lot of weight since beginning Depakote and is about 100 lbs. overweight. Sierra recently disclosed that her father and mother allowed drug buyers to sexually abuse her in the last 6 months before she came into care.

How will the TEAM work with Sierra to plan for transitioning into self-sufficiency? What about her life connections? What needs to happen to help her define specific plans for her education? What skills will Sierra need to manage her health and housing?

# Famous Failures

Who said that he missed more than 9000 shots in career, lost almost 300 games, and missed 26 game winning shots?

- A. Babe Ruth
- B. Arnold Palmer
- C. Michael Jordan



C. Michael Jordan



Was told by teachers that he was too stupid to learn anything.

- Had 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at his best known invention.

A. Isaac Newton

B. Thomas Edison

C. Albert Einstein



B. Thomas Edison



Did not speak until age 4, did not read until age 7, was expelled from school.

- A. Bill Gates
- B. Winston Churchill
- C. Albert Einstein



C. *Albert Einstein*



Famous recipe was rejected over 1000 times before restaurant accepted it.

- A. Colonel Sanders
- B. Emeril
- C. Martha Stewart





# A. Colonel Sanders



Every cartoon submitted to high school yearbook was rejected

- A. Walt Disney
- B. Charles Schultz (Peanuts)
- C. Jim Davis (Garfield)




B. Charles Schultz



Dependant on welfare for a time, this single mother was advised to “continue her teaching job” while she wrote her first book

- A. Margaret Atwood
- B. J.K. Rowling
- C. Agatha Christie




B. J.K. Rowling



Dropped out of Harvard. First business failed miserably.

- A. Donald Trump
- B. Bill Gates
- C. Sam Walton




B. Bill Gates



First book was rejected 27 times

- A. Stephen Spielberg
- B. Charles Dickens
- C. Dr. Seuss





C. Dr. Seuss



Failed 6<sup>th</sup> grade

- Defeated in every attempt to seek political office until finally elected at age 62

A. Winston Churchill

B. Andrew Jackson

C. Bill Clinton



# A. Winston Churchill

## TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FOR GROUP FACILITATION

[http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules\\_pdf/BonCurFacilitation202.pdf](http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules_pdf/BonCurFacilitation202.pdf)

The facilitator serves as a coordinator and organizer, ensuring everyone is participating and staying on task.

Facilitators clarify issues, focus discussions, bring out viewpoints, synthesize differences, and look for underlying agreements.

✖ It is critical for the facilitator to have the capacity to develop mutual respect among the group in order to maximize the work. Facilitators take risks and work hard.

There is no one right way on how to facilitate meetings.

Good facilitators

Remember prevention rather than interventions, and

Keep their eyes on the goal (a workable Life Plan for self-sufficiency)

It is inevitable that people who lead a meeting will at some point have to manage difficult and/or complex behaviors of people attending the meeting.

Remember to address the **behavior!**

There are a variety of ways that people can try to undermine or sidetrack the meeting. Following are some suggestions that are useful for a range of comments or behaviors.

### **Sample responses to challenging people that you can use:**

- “I’d like to talk to you more about that. Would you see me at the break to discuss this further?”

- “You are very knowledgeable about this topic. Thank you for sharing your perspective.”
- “Your suggestion is interesting/good. For this meeting, we need to focus on helping \_\_\_\_\_ with developing a workable Transitional Life Plan. We’ll need to look at scheduling another meeting to address that topic.”
- “I hear 3 questions. Let’s deal with one question at a time.”
  - Repeat the questions to check for clarity
  - Consider writing the questions on a flipchart
- “Thank you for asking. I must not have been clear before. Let me try to explain again, or in a different way.”

**When someone talks too much:**

- Avoid discouraging the excessive talker. Instead, encourage the others to participate more.
- Go around the group, giving each participant a turn to talk.
- Acknowledge the comment and involve others: "Al, that was an interesting insight. Barbara, what are your views on this issue?"
- Before the meeting or during a break, enlist the help of the excessive talker in encouraging the silent participants to open up.
- At the start of the meeting, establish equal participation by all members as a team goal. Encourage the participants to help monitor and manage personal participation.

**You ask a question and no one answers. The question is met with complete silence:**

- If there is no response to your question, say, "Turn to the person next to you and discuss this."

**When someone doesn't talk at all:**

Silence does not always mean consent. Encouraging the silent types to talk will help foster a more inclusive environment by setting a model for equal participation everyone.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with participants who don't participate:

- Call on the silent participant by name. Frequently use the name of this participant.
- Direct questions to the silent participant. Ask questions related to the silent participant's areas of expertise and interest.
- Ask the silent participant to react to someone else's statement.
- Ask everyone to take turns to make a 1-minute presentation or spend one minute talking about their hopes, concerns for the youth.
- Reinforce comments from the quiet participant (without appearing to be patronizing).
- Before the meeting or during a break, talk to the silent participant. Emphasize the importance of her or his participation.
- Before the meeting or during a break, assign the role of identifying and drawing out reluctant participant to a one or two team members.

**When a pair or group of attendees spends a great deal of time talking among themselves, routinely get off topic, seem to distance themselves from the rest of the group, or appear to be at cross purposes to the tasks and goal of the group:**

- A good facilitator will have to allow some sidebar conversations and small group deviation, but the trick is knowing when to intervene based on the nature of the sidetracking.
- Stand up and move around the room. Work your way over to the group and stand close to the group.
- When you are setting the meeting up, consider whether you need to assign seating. If you know a pair or small group who routinely act in one of these ways, separate them.
- Talking among themselves may be due to the fact that the people know each other well.
- If you don't know beforehand, at break, quietly approach one of the group and
  - Ask if everything is okay,
  - Ask is there something going on (work-related) that they need to deal with outside the Life Plan meeting
  - Remind the “leader” of the group of the reason for the meeting and ask for help in getting the Life Plan developed.

Material on this page adapted from: [www.thiagi.com/tips.html](http://www.thiagi.com/tips.html); Advanced Facilitation, Langevin Learning Services.

Attendee is argumentative and negative and seems to be set on "high jacking" the meeting.

Take a short break and talk to the person in private to try to get back on track

*Gently, but firmly, confront the attendee and invite the person to help the group with the agenda*

Use a "parking lot" to put sidetrack topics down, offer to address at the end of the meeting when other items have been addressed.

?

?

?

Ask group members to comment on what is going on

*At break, ask your supervisor to assist when meeting resumes*

Re-emphasize the purpose of the meeting (Life Plan for Ben)

Consider asking person to meet with you and supervisor separately at another time



Worker (or Supervisor) [person leading the meeting]

Hello, welcome. I am glad to see you all here today. We appreciate you coming. This is an important day for Ben. We are all coming together to help him make plans for the immediate future so that he is growing and learning and preparing to succeed in life.

I'm (your name) and I have been working with Ben for \_\_\_\_\_ years/months. He has so many positive qualities. I particularly appreciate his sense of humor. I'd like to have Ben introduce himself.

Ben: Hi, thanks for coming. I have a lot of plans to make and need your help. I hope you can help me.

Worker (or Supervisor) to Ben: Now, will you go around the room and introduce the people who are here? Just say their names and then each person can tell us a little about him or herself.

*Ben goes around the room and says each person's name. Each person tells the group what he/she does (Transitional Services coordinator, foster parent, therapist, etc), may say how long he/she has worked with Ben, and makes one positive statement about Ben.*

Worker (or Supervisor): Thank you all. We have a lot of work to do so we need to get started.

First, I want to remind everyone that this is a planning meeting for and about Ben. This is about his life. The meeting needs to stay strength-based and positively focused with all of us making every effort to come up with a workable plan that will benefit Ben.

We need to begin with the end in mind – for Ben to be self-sufficient and have permanent connections as he matures into adulthood.

We are going to work with Ben to develop his Transitional Life Plan for the next 1-3 months (maybe 6 months in some areas – it just depends). Our focus is on the present and very near future.

**We all need to agree to and sign the Confidentiality statement. There is a copy for each of you on the table.** (This may or may not be a part of the Team meeting. It is not standardized at this point.)

*[Have everyone read and sign the form and place face down in the center of the table to collect later.]*

The way the meeting will proceed is that we will concentrate on plans for the next 1-3 months in the areas that are outlined on the Life Plan. Eventually, all of the categories will need to be addressed but we don't have to get around to all of the areas today.

*Remember, all of the categories need to be addressed eventually (by age 17 ½), but all do not HAVE to be addressed at the first meeting. Prior to this meeting, staff will have met with the youth to help him prepare and prioritize his goals for the meeting. These priorities may have to be altered at the time of the meeting if key people in a specific area of focus do not attend.*

Everyone should have received a copy of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement with your invitation to this staffing (or staffing notice.) Hopefully, you've had a chance to look at it and begin to think about how you can assist Ben plan in some of these areas.

Ben has a spent some time thinking about the plan and has made some notes that he brings with him today.

Worker to Ben: Ben, what area do you want to start with? And share some of your ideas that you have come up with for that area.

*This allows Ben to start with his priorities, which may be life connections or may be housing, rather than going straight down the list of categories.*

*Also, keep broad definitions of these categories in mind. For example, with housing for a 15 year old, the group may need to discuss what is going on at his current placement in order to preserve this placement, rather than having a discussion about housing for college/technical program (or leaving foster care.)*

Ben: (Starts with Life Connections) I want to see my sister more and spend more time with her.

Jill to Ben: I would like that too. I'm going to school right now and working, so I don't have a lot of free time.

Worker to Jill: I hear you say you want to spend time with Ben so I think we can look at your schedule and his schedule and work something out.

Is there a day that you do not have classes?

Jill: The only days I don't have classes right now are Saturday and Sunday.

Worker: What is your class schedule for the other days of the week?

Jill:  
M, W, F (8:45 – 4:00)  
T, Th (10:00 – 2:00)

Worker: So you get out of class pretty early on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Jill: Yes, but those are the days I get my hours at work in.

Worker: Do you have a regular day off from work during the week?

Jill: No, not really, my schedule changes every week, except for Tuesdays and Thursdays. I know I'm working those days.

Worker: Do you work Sundays?

Jill: Yes, but we are only open from 12 – 6 on Sundays.

Worker: What about doing something together on Sunday evenings?

Jill: That might work. I sometimes need to do homework or study, but I could try.

Houseparent: Check-in time on Sunday is 8 pm. I'm not so sure that would work.

Worker to Houseparent: Is the 8 pm check-in absolute or are there exceptions such as a visit for family time?

Houseparent: It's the standard rule for everybody.

[Another idea to address a system barrier might be for the houseparent to say that if Ben has not completed his chores, he will not be able to go on a family visit with Jill. Sunday evenings are the days they have to complete any unfinished chores or face write-up.]

Worker: What about another day of the week? Ben, what do you think? What day of the week might be good for you?

Ben: Wednesday would be good. I don't have practice on Wed.

Jill: I might be able to do Wednesday for a couple of hours. Maybe not every single Wednesday because of homework or tests or whatever. But we can try.

*What if Jill lives on campus of a university in a different town from where Ben resides and the visits involved some travel? What kinds of arrangements would need to be made then?*

Worker: Okay, so we are working on Ben's being able to spend more time with Jill on Wednesdays. We need to work out the details about time and transportation.

Jill: I can come pick him up at 5 pm on Wednesdays and then have him back by 7:30 or 8:00.

Ben: *[Exclamation of glee! ]*

Worker: Jill, if you cannot pick Ben up at the scheduled time or are unable to make the visit, you will need to call the group home and let the houseparent know. Maybe the two of you could have a phone conversation instead.

Worker: That reminds me. Do the two of you email or chat online?

Ben and Jill together: Yes!

Worker: Great! I hope that you talk to each other as often as possible that way since it is easy and quick for everybody, especially when we're all so busy.

Worker to Ben: Do you have other items in the Life Connections area that you want to address?

Ben: Yes, I would really like to try to talk to my cousin Shane. He's 15 too and we hung out some before I came into care.

Worker to Ben: Where does your cousin live?

Ben: They did live in Smalltown (about 2 hours from the group home).

Jill: I'm not sure if they are still there. Have you looked for him on Facebook?

Ben: I can't find him. I looked for Aunt Tonya too. Do you have her number?

Jill: No, the last number I had was disconnected when I called a while back.

Worker: Jill, if you can get with me after the meeting, you can give me some background information on your Aunt Tonya and perhaps we can find her through a records search.

Therapist: Ben, I remember you talking about another family member. Aunt DeeDee?

Jill: She's not really an aunt. She was my mom's best friend when we were younger. They lived next door to us. We called her Aunt Dee Dee, but she wasn't our aunt.

Ben: She took care of us some when mom wasn't around.

Worker: Jill, when we get together afterwards, we can try to see if you have any information that might help us to find this Aunt Dee Dee.

Jill: Why would we want to find her? She was just a friend and that was a long time ago.

Therapist: She was an important person to Ben for a little while. Even if she is not related by blood, she may be someone who could be a support to you both. *[Turning to Ben]* Ben, you said she was good to you, like a second mom. Is this someone you might want to try to re-connect with?

Ben: Yeah, I guess.

Worker: Okay, well, we can try to find out some information on Dee Dee and see if we can get in touch with her.

Worker to Ben: Are there other things in Life Connections that you want to plan for today?

Ben: Nah.

*Worker quickly recaps the Life Connection plans starting with trying to find the fictive kin "Aunt Dee Dee", then moves on to Aunt Tonya and Shane, and ends with spending more time with Jill.*

*The idea of spending more time with Jill seems to re-energize Ben.*

*Worker calls for a 10 minute break(for bathroom, get drinks, snacks.)*

Resume meeting promptly

Worker: That was very good work we did before the break. We accomplished a lot and addressed an important concern for Ben.

Ben, what is the next area of planning that you want the group to focus on?

Ben: Well, I guess it has to be school and grades. I want to play football and I can't do that if my grades don't come up. I need help in math and science.

Worker: What are your grades in math and science?

Ben: D's. If I can't bring them up, I won't be able to play in the fall.

Coach: Ben, I'm counting on you for a defensive player. There are other guys on the team who go to after school tutoring. It means you won't have any time between when school lets out and when practice starts. We start practice exactly at 4:30 and go to 6:30 every day of the week. And we'll be practicing this summer.

School counselor or School-based social worker: Tutoring will help. But you will have to do some work on your own also. Is there anyone at the group home who can help?

Houseparent: We have study hours every night from 4-5 and 8-9. If he has homework, that is when he is supposed to do it. It's also when he can get help from our staff. He usually tells me he doesn't have any homework or he finished it in class.

# Transitional Youth Services

MidSOUTH Training Academy  
Continuing Education



# Welcome

- Get the most out of training:
  - Take good notes
    - See, Hear, Do
  - Take active part in small group work
  - Take the opportunity to network with your peers
  - Meet one new contact
  - Commit to doing one thing differently, more creatively, or more efficiently upon return



# What if...

- We could shift our expectations about a “training event” → to learning as a continuous, collaborative process?
- We had the confidence to publicly acknowledge what we don't know?

AND

- Asking for help became an indicator of strength rather than a sign of weakness.

# Agenda

Review information and activities to engage and prepare youth to participate in the development of his/her own Life Plan

- Review development
- Review strategies to engage youth
- Learn strategies to ensure getting the right people involved

# Agenda cont'd

Review skills needed to plan, conduct, facilitate a Transitional Life Plan team meeting

- Preparing for the meeting
- Structuring the meeting
- Preparing participants
- Practice, observe and critique a Transitional Life planning meeting

# Federal Law

## The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893/P.L. 110-351)

- promotes permanent families for children and youth through relative guardianship and adoption and
- improves education and health care by extending federal support for youth to age 21.
- offers for the first time important federal protections and support to many American Indian children

# NYTD


## National Youth in Transition Database

- a data collection system to track the independent living services provided to youth and
- to develop outcomes that measure states' success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living.

# State Law

- A.C.A. § 9-27-363 Foster Youth Transition
  - Focus on permanency efforts
  - Inclusion of youth (and youth's atty) in planning
  - Provide youth with basic information
  - Requires transitional plan
    - No later than 17<sup>th</sup> birthday (within 90 days if 17 when enters FC)
    - Education, employment, health, housing, lifelong connections

# Remember when...

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue top and a dark blue patterned scarf, is holding a white rectangular sign in front of her chest. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid orange color.

**TURN to your  
neighbor and  
discuss your  
answers.**

# Remember When

- 3 adjectives that best described me when I was a teen were...
- Back then, I thought I would be...\_\_\_\_\_...when I “grew up”.
- I learned how to DRIVE from \_\_\_\_\_.
- I learned how to COOK from \_\_\_\_\_.
  - MANAGE MONEY/BANK ACCT - \_\_\_\_\_.
  - WASH CLOTHES/CLEAN HOUSE - \_\_\_\_\_.
- I sent graduation announcements/invitations to these people...
- These people came to “family” birthday parties...
- My first job was...
- The first big thing I did with my own money was...
- When I moved out, one of the things I most looked forward to was...
- My fondest memories of my teenage years involved...



# Adolescent Development

## Ten Tasks of Adolescence

- Adjust to sexually maturing bodies and feelings
- Develop-Apply abstract thinking skills
- Develop-Apply more complex perspective taking
- Develop-Apply more complex coping skills
- Identify meaningful moral standards, values, and belief systems

# Adolescent Development

Ten Tasks continued...

- Understand-express more complex emotional experiences
- Form mutually close and supportive friendships
- Establish key aspects of identity
- Meet demands of more mature roles/responsibilities
- Renegotiate relationships with adults-parents

A man in a brown trench coat is shown from the waist up, celebrating with his arms raised and a hat in his left hand. He is holding a large white sign in front of him. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy clouds and a blurred cityscape at the bottom. On the left side of the image, there are blue decorative lines and dots.

**Identify**

**2 aspects of  
development  
that are most  
challenging**

**2 ways to deal  
with the  
challenge**

A man in a brown trench coat is shown from the waist up, celebrating with his arms raised. He is holding a brown hat in his left hand and has his right fist clenched. He is holding a large white sign in front of him. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy clouds and a blurred cityscape at the bottom. On the left side of the image, there are blue decorative lines and dots.

**Identify**

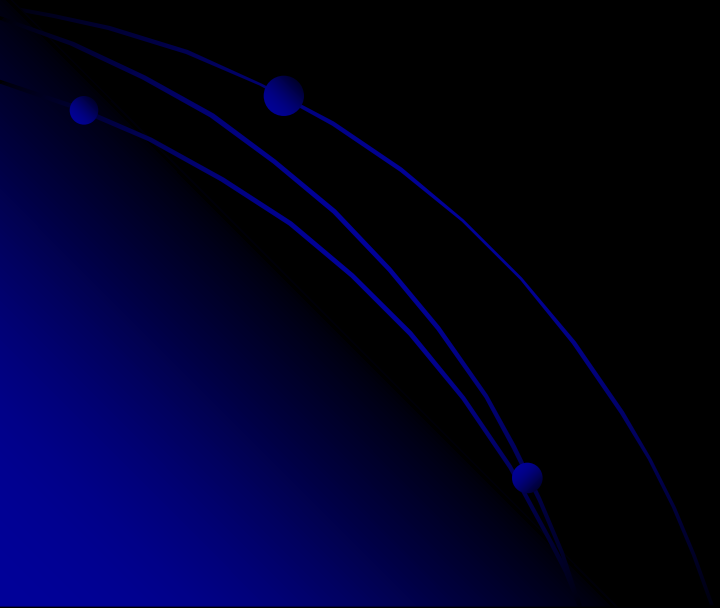
**2 strategies for  
communicating  
with teens**

# Famous Failures

Who said that he missed more than 9000 shots in career, lost almost 300 games, and missed 26 game winning shots?

- Babe Ruth
- Arnold Palmer
- Michael Jordan

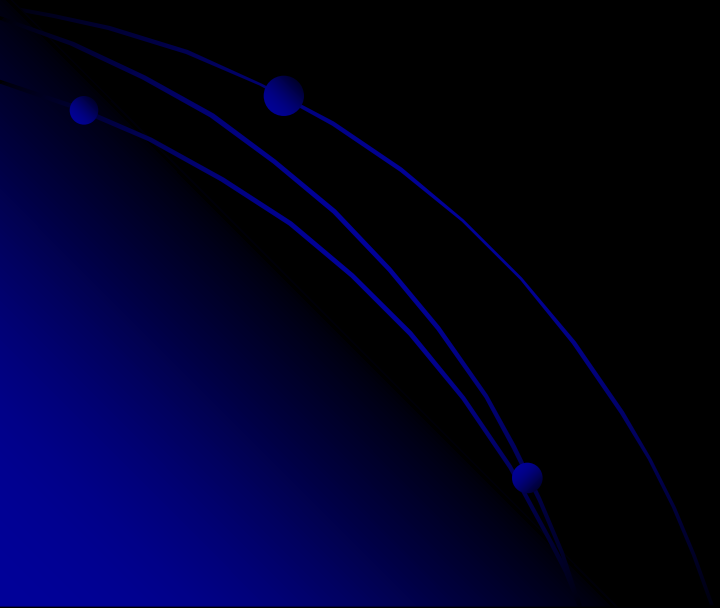
C. Michael Jordan



Was told by teachers that he was too stupid to learn anything. Had 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at his best known invention.

- Isaac Newton
- Thomas Edison
- Albert Einstein

B.Thomas Edison

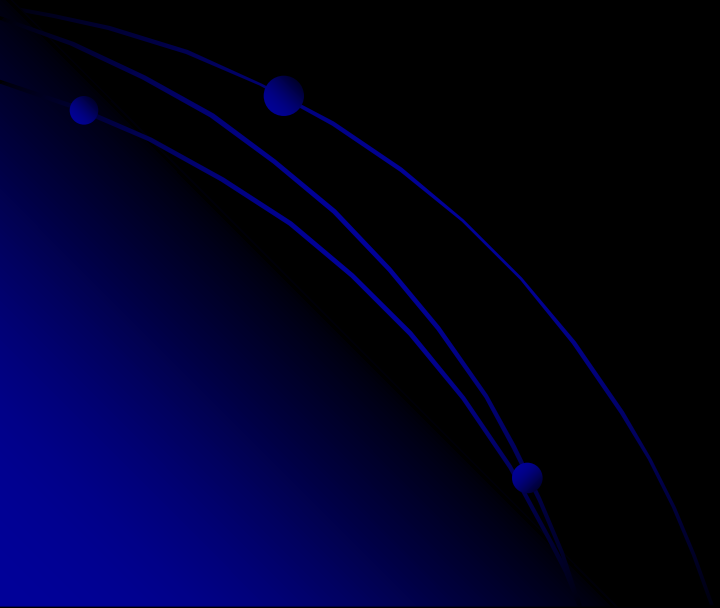




Did not speak until age 4, did not read until age 7, was expelled from school.

- Bill Gates
- Winston Churchill
- Albert Einstein

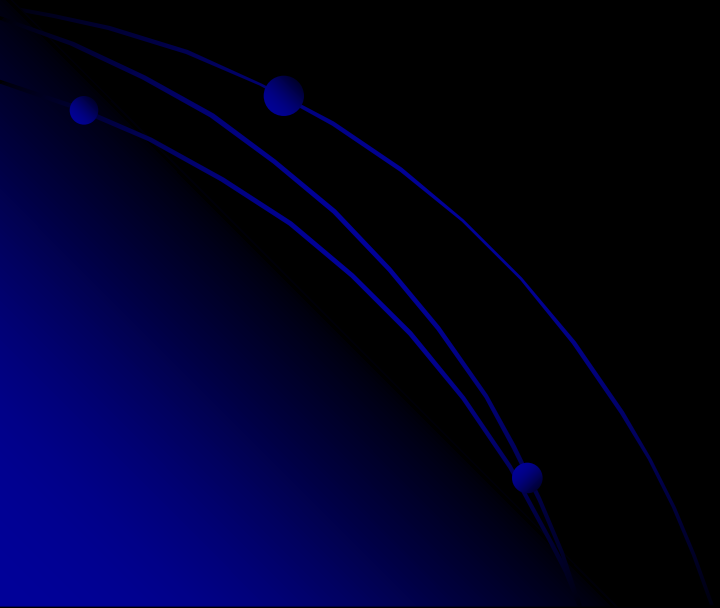
C. Albert Einstein



Famous recipe was rejected over 1000 times before restaurant accepted it.

- Colonel Sanders
- Emeril
- Martha Stewart

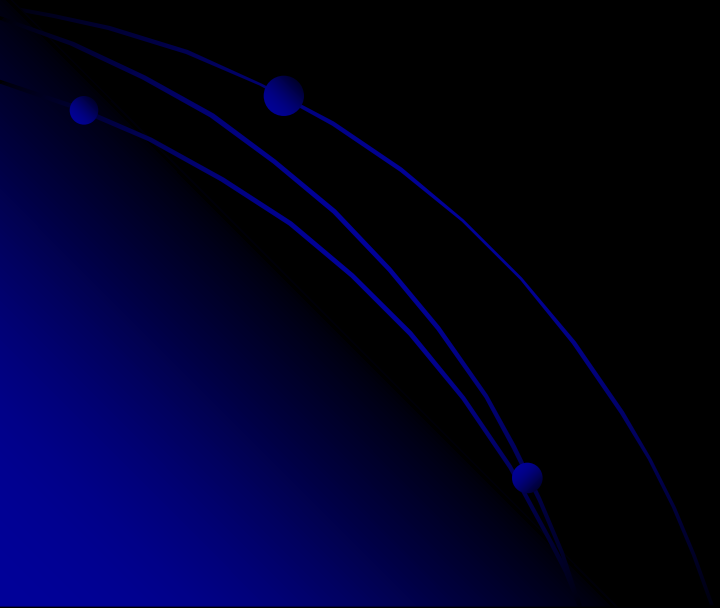
## A. Colonel Sanders



Every cartoon submitted to high school yearbook was rejected

- Walt Disney
- Charles Schultz (Peanuts)
- Jim Davis (Garfield)

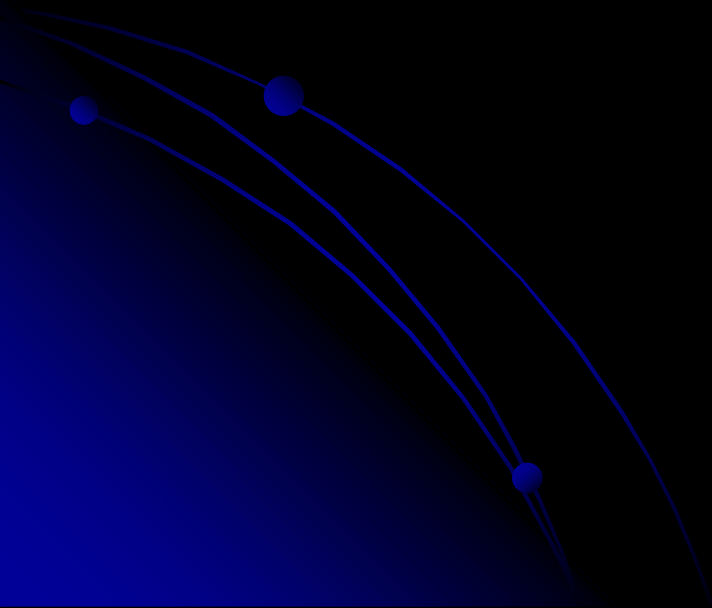
B. Charles Schultz



Dependant on welfare for a time, this single mother was advised to “continue her teaching job” while she wrote her first book

- Margaret Atwood
- J.K. Rowling
- Agatha Christie

B. J.K. Rowling

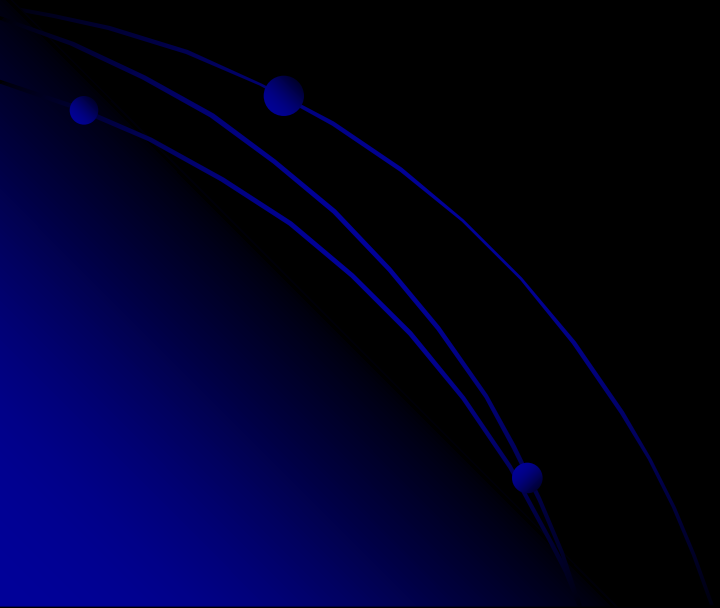




Dropped out of Harvard. First business failed miserably.

- Donald Trump
- Bill Gates
- Sam Walton

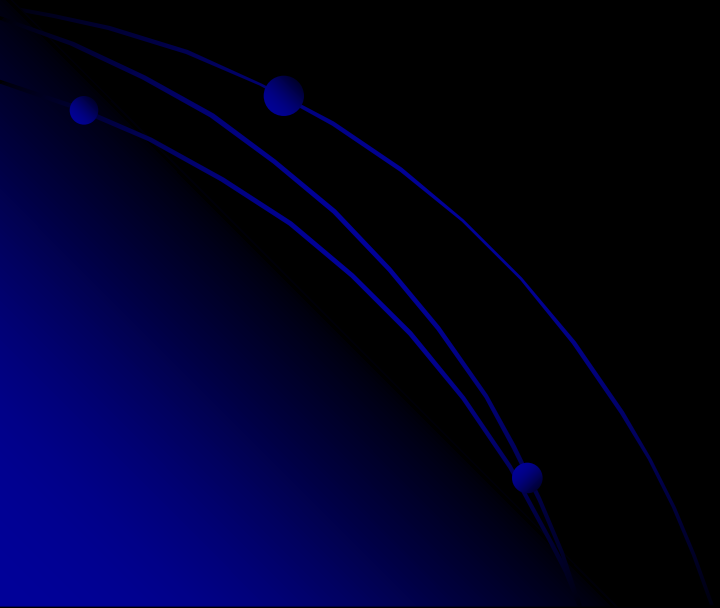
- B. Bill Gates



First book was rejected 27 times

- Michael Crichton
  - Charles Dickens
  - Dr. Seuss
- 

Dr. Suess



# Engage

In small groups discuss

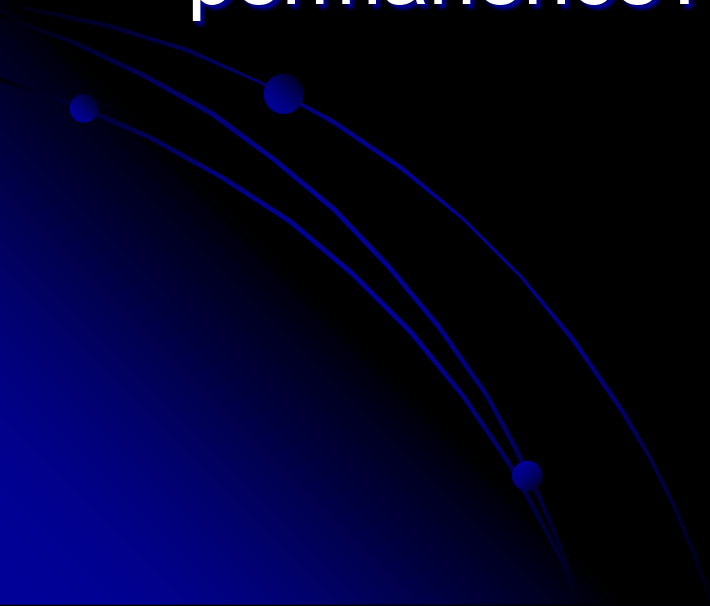
- 5-10 ideas for getting youth talking and actively participating

***“Small talks often.”***

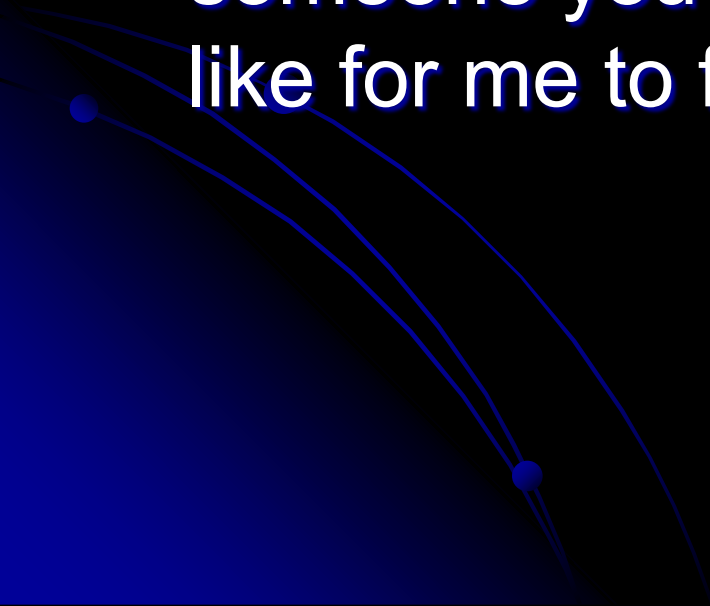


# Lifelong connections

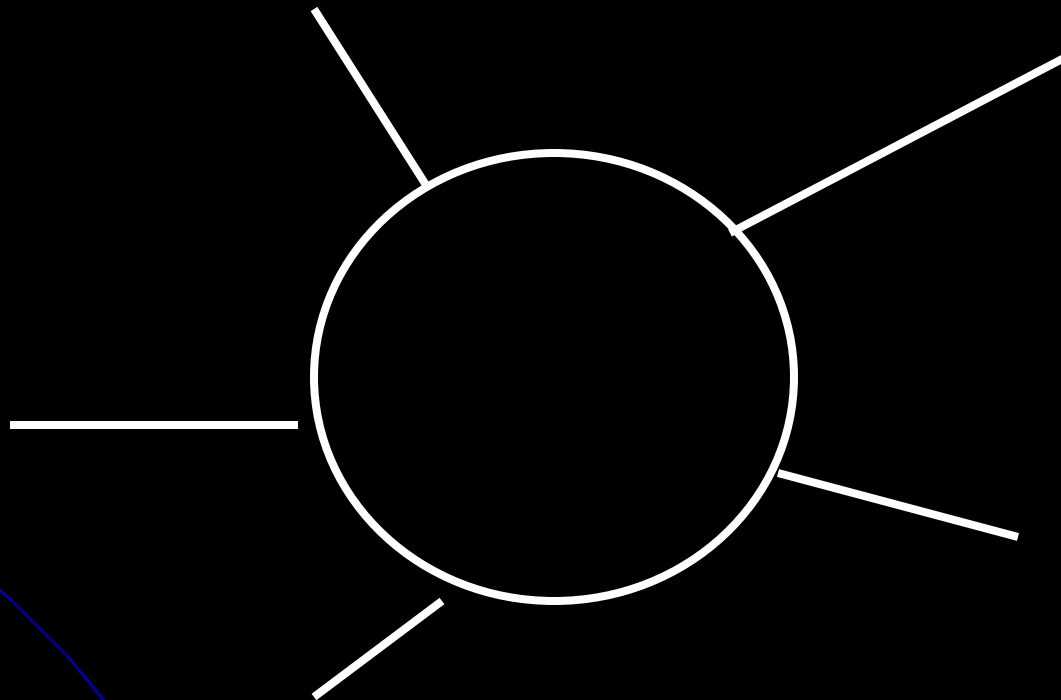
What are some reasons why adolescents react negatively to our attempts to discuss people in their lives who might be lifelong connections or provide some level of permanence?



“I’m going to go through your record very thoroughly to prepare for the Life Planning meeting. Do you want me to look for someone’s contact information? Is there someone you remember that you would like for me to find in the record?”



# Idea Map





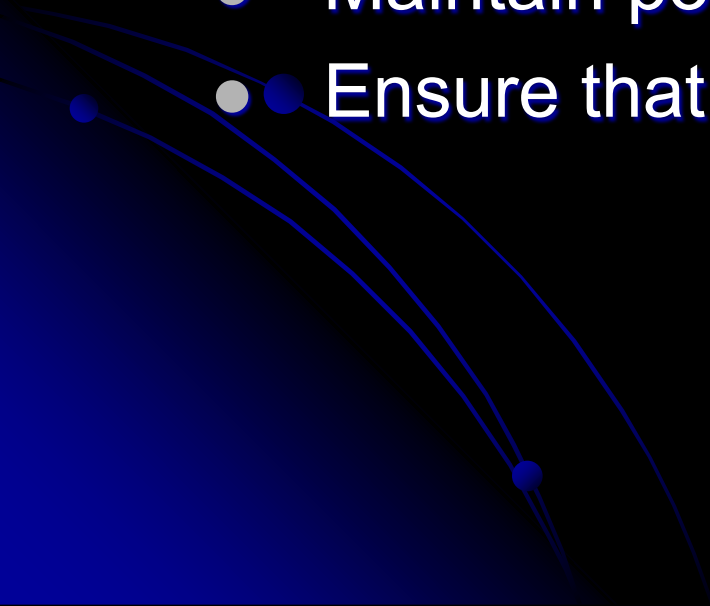
# Meeting Facilitation Tips

- Keep group task focused
- Encourage creativity
- Use attending and active listening skills
- Have strategy ready if things do not go as planned
- Level the playing field
- Have someone assigned to take notes, minutes.

# Guidelines for Structuring Meeting

- Welcome and introductions
  - Thank everyone
  - Clear statement of purpose of the meeting
  - Youth centered approach
  - Positive statement about youth
  - Request youth identify people in room
  - Each person can introduce self
  - Each person says something positive about youth
  - Orientation to location
  - Review flow for the meeting
  - Any discussion guidelines

# Guidelines for meeting cont'd

- Information gathering and sharing
    - Brainstorm
    - Focus on present and near future (1-3-6 months)
    - Maintain positive tone of meeting
    - Ensure that topics are discussed thoroughly
- 

# Guidelines for meeting cont'd

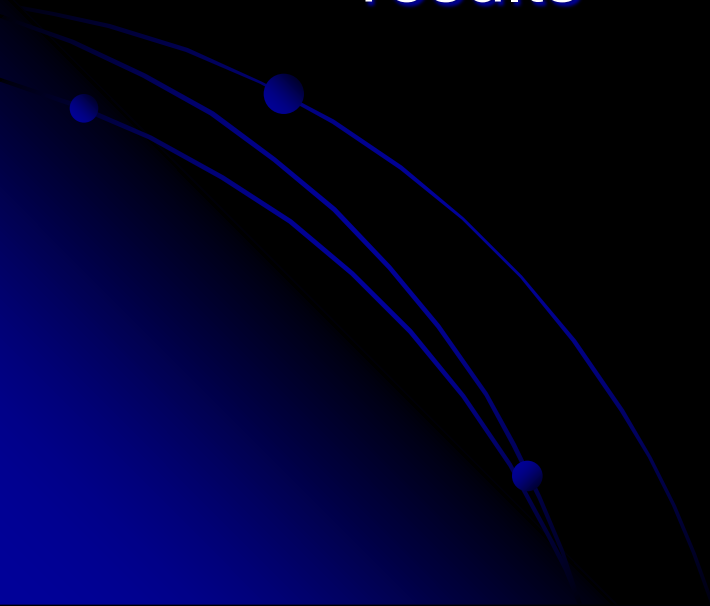
- Documenting the Plan
  - Capture the information from the brainstorming into the categories of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - Notes on topics that need to be addressed further in future meetings
  - Maintain focus on the present and near future (1-3-6) months
  - Remember that the plan is subject to change
  - Agree on tasks and timeframes

# Guidelines for meeting cont'd.

- Closing the Meeting
  - Review the specifics (Who, What, When, Where, How)
  - Discuss follow-up details (who will check in with whom about progress)
  - Meeting planner and/or Life Plan with own tasks
  - Distribution of the plan?
  - Collect feedback from those present about the staffing
  - Thank everyone for coming

# Guidelines for meeting cont'd.

- Monitoring and Follow-up
  - Set up time table to check in with team members to follow-up
  - Immediately document team meeting results



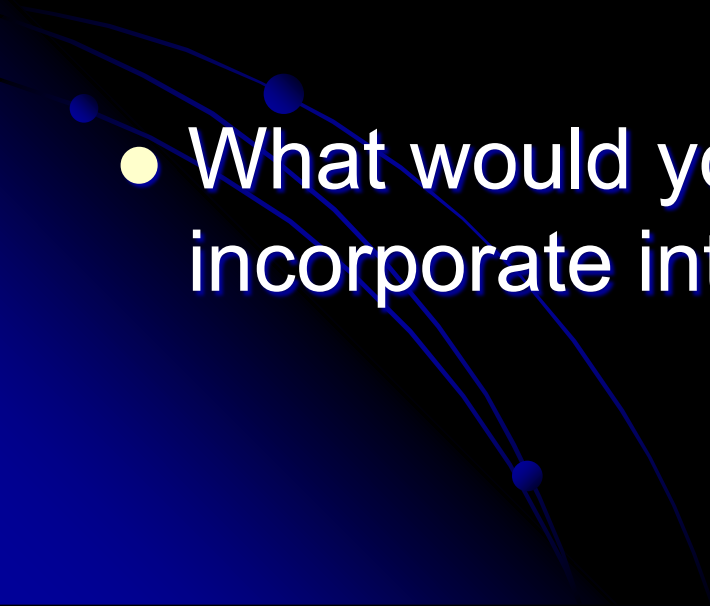
# Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting – Structured Experiential Learning Activity

The group's tasks for this activity are

- to plan a Transitional Life Plan meeting, and
- to hold a Transitional Life Plan meeting and create/develop a Life Plan for a youth during the meeting.

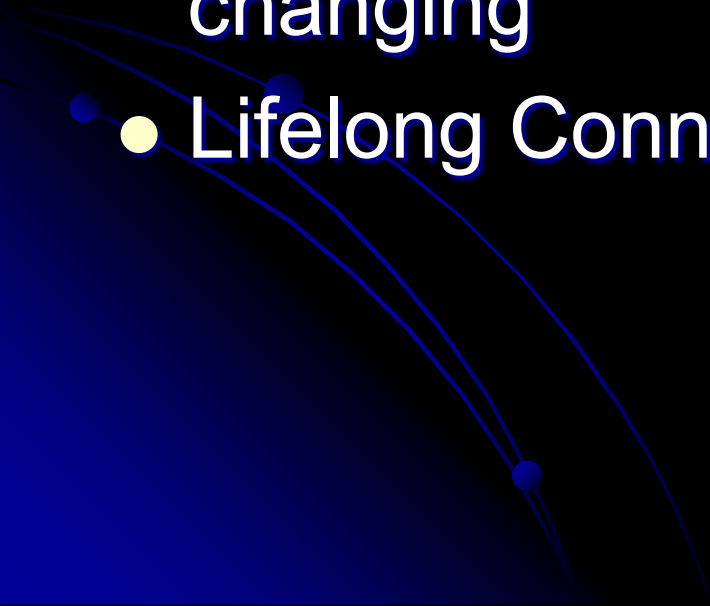
***Make this meeting as  
realistic as possible.***

# Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting

- What went well? What could be improved?
  - Was the meeting youth-centered? Youth-driven?
  - What would you like to take back and incorporate into your own practice?
- 



# Transitional Planning

- Arkansas Model of Practice supports
    - Team approach
    - Youth have access to array of resources
  - Permanency planning is ongoing and changing
  - Lifelong Connections are KEY
- 

# Resources

- Participant Resources contain an extensive amount of information put together by the Transitional Youth Services program to assist the TYS Coordinator, FSW, and FSW Supervisor plan for youth transitioning into self-sufficiency.

# Wrap-Up

- There are always unanswered questions
- We make choices about what we take back to the workplace and implement
- One thing I will do differently or more creatively upon return...



**Share new ideas  
and strategies  
with your co-  
workers**

**Make a difference  
in the life of a  
young person**

**Be an agent of  
change in your  
organization**



# **TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

Participant Manual

Continuing Education Training

## Contents

NEED FOR TRAINING.....	3
OBJECTIVE AND COMPETENCIES .....	4
AGENDA .....	5
OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND NYTD.....	6
TRANSITIONAL YOUTH PLAN AND TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN.....	7
REMEMBER WHEN.....	8
THE TEN TASKS OF ADOLESCENCE .....	9
COMMUNICATING WITH ADOLESCENTS .....	11
MAKING MISTAKES.....	13
PRACTICE TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUT .....	14
IDENTIFYING SUPPORTS.....	17
PEOPLE FINDER.....	18
MEETING FACILITATION TIPS.....	19
PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING .....	21
GUIDELINES FOR STRUCTURING TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING...	23
LIFE PLAN AND AGREEMENT FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION.....	24

## TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES TRAINING

### **NEED FOR TRAINING**

Previously, supervisory staff, university field instructors, and some stakeholders were brought together for an opportunity to learn strategies to promote and support transitional planning in the field.

This training was prepared for DCFS to train Family Service Workers to engage youth in the process of transitional planning so that youth have a workable Transitional Life Plan that supports their life goals and promotes self-sufficiency.

There have been recent changes in federal and state laws that impact service delivery to youth in transition. A summary of those changes is included.

To accomplish the training objective, several separate training initiatives will take place. These may not happen in the following order.

#### Training 1:

- Focus on the DCFS team creating successful transitions for youth in foster care to self-sufficiency.
  - What has to be done to promote youth to self-sufficiency and how is the DCFS team going to accomplish it?
- Provide field staff with a tool kit, including specific and detailed guides to accessing various services, programs, etc.

#### Training 2:

- Enhance broader participation from community providers and stakeholders in transitional planning and work.

#### Training 3:

- CHRIS documentation for Transitional Youth Services
- Overview of National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) overview (surveys begin Oct 1 by Federal law)

## OBJECTIVE AND COMPETENCIES

### Overall Training Objective:

To enhance the ability of the worker and supervisor to work in conjunction with transitional services coordinators to engage youth in the process of transitional planning so that youth have a workable Transitional Life Plan that supports their life goals and promotes self-sufficiency.

- ✓ What has to be done to promote youth to self-sufficiency and how is the ***transitional team*** going to accomplish it?

### Competencies to be addressed:

The worker:

- ✓ Understands the necessity of permanency planning
- ✓ Knows how to involve agency team members in placement activities
- ✓ Understands the appropriate use of Life Books
- ✓ Has knowledge of adolescent development
- ✓ Can assess adolescent's behavior within context
- ✓ Can develop relevant case plans
- ✓ Knows casework strategies to engage youth in planning
- ✓ Can assess youth's skills needed for self-sufficiency
- ✓ Knows the benefits of an interdisciplinary team approach
- ✓ Can work collaboratively with staff in other units, departments



## AGENDA

- I. In order to engage and prepare youth to participate in the development of his/her own Life Plan:
  - a. Review adolescent development
  - b. Review strategies to engage
  - c. Review need for team to allow real opportunities for self-determination through successes and failures
- II. In order to coordinate and facilitate a Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting, focus on:
  - a. Getting the right people to the table (Who to invite)
  - b. Preparing for the Team Meeting
  - c. Structuring a team meeting (Guidelines for the meeting)
  - d. Ensuring participation of broad array of key people in youth's life
  - e. Reviewing skills needed to plan and facilitate meeting and manage group dynamics
  - f. Practicing and Observing/critiquing facilitating a Transitional Team Meeting and managing group dynamics
- III. Practice Developing the Life Plan as a Team
  - a. Work through the development of a detailed Life Plan
  - b. Address reasonable time frames for planning, i.e., 1-3-6-9 months
  - c. Ensure attention to all domains of plan, i.e., employment, education, health, housing, and life connections
  - d. Plan for follow-up with members of the team on tasks identified during Life Plan development
- IV. Resources/Toolkit
- V. Wrap-Up

## OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

### **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L.110-351)**

Fostering Connections will help children and youth in foster care by

- ❖ promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption
- ❖ Improving education and health care by extending federal support for youth, and
- ❖ will offer many American Indian children/youth important federal protections and support.

### **National Youth in Transition Database - NYTD**

- ❖ a data collection system to track the independent living services provided to youth and to develop outcomes that measure states' success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living.

### **A.C.A. § 9-27-363 Foster Youth Transition**

- ❖ Focus on permanency efforts
- ❖ Inclusion of youth (and youth's atty) in planning
- ❖ Provide youth with basic information
- ❖ Requires transitional plan
  - No later than 17th birthday (within 90 days if 17 when enters FC)
  - Education, employment, health, housing, lifelong connections

## **TRANSITIONAL YOUTH PLAN AND TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ANYWAY?**

### **Transitional Plan**

- Required by law
- Included within the Case plan in CHRIS
- Begins with the Youth's Life Plan

### **Life Plan**

- Youth's plan
- Requires active involvement of youth
- Client-focused, youth driven
- Serves as foundation for Transitional Plan
- Shorter term
- Describes current functioning
- Discussed and updated frequently

## ICEBREAKER

Talk with your neighbors about the following:

The 3 adjectives that best described me when I was a teen were...

Back then, I thought I would be...\_\_\_\_\_...when I "grew up".

I learned how to DRIVE from \_\_\_\_\_.

I learned how to COOK from \_\_\_\_\_.

MANAGE MONEY/BANK ACCT - \_\_\_\_\_.

WASH CLOTHES/CLEAN HOUSE - \_\_\_\_\_.

I sent graduation announcements/invitations to these people...

These people came to "family" birthday parties...

My first job was...

The first big thing I did with my own money was...

When I moved out, one of the things I most looked forward to was...

My fondest memories of my teenage years involved...

**"I'll tell ya how to stay young: Hang around with older people." ~ Bob Hope**

### **The Ten Tasks of Adolescence\***

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Adjust to sexually maturing bodies and feeling   | Teens are faced with adjusting to bodies that as much as double in size and that acquire sexual characteristics, as well as learning to manage the accompanying biological changes and sexual feelings and to engage in healthy sexual behaviors. Their task also includes establishing a sexual identity and developing the skills for romantic relationships. |
| 2. Develop-apply abstract thinking skills   | Teens typically undergo profound changes in their way of thinking during adolescence, allowing them more effectively to understand and coordinate abstract ideas, to think about possibilities, to try out hypotheses, to think ahead, to think about thinking, and to construct philosophies.  |
| 3. Develop-apply a more complex level of perspective taking                                     | Teens typically acquire a powerful new ability to understand human relationships, in which, having learned to “put themselves in another person’s shoes,” they learn to take into account both their perspective and another person’s at the same time, and to use this new ability in resolving problems and conflicts in relationships.                       |
| 4. Develop-apply new coping skills in decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution | Related to all these dramatic shifts, teens are involved in acquiring new abilities to think about and plan for the future, to engage in more sophisticated strategies for decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution, and to moderate their risk taking to serve goals rather than jeopardize them.   |
| 5. Identify meaningful moral standards, values, and belief systems                              | Building on these changes and resulting skills, teens typically develop a more complex understanding of moral behavior and underlying principles of justice and care, questioning beliefs from childhood and adopting more personally meaningful values, religious views, and belief systems to guide their decisions and behavior.                             |
| 6. Understand-express more complex emotional experiences  | Also related to these changes are shifts for teens toward an ability to identify and communicate more complex emotions, to understand the emotions of others in more sophisticated ways, and to think about emotions in abstract ways.  |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 7. Form friendships that are mutually exclusive and supportive        | Although youngsters typically have friends throughout childhood, teens generally develop peer relationships that play much more powerful roles in providing support and connection in their lives. They tend to shift from friendships based largely on the sharing of interests and activities to those based on the sharing of ideas and feelings, with the development of mutual trust and understanding.  |
| 8. Establish key aspects of identity                                  | Identity formation is in a sense a lifelong process, but crucial aspects of identity are typically forged at adolescence, including developing an identity that reflects a sense of individuality as well as connection to valued people and groups.<br>Another part of this task is developing a positive identity around gender, physical attributes, sexuality, and ethnicity and, if appropriate, having been adopted, as well as sensitivity to the diversity of groups that make up American society. |
| 9. Meet the demands of increasingly mature roles and responsibilities | Teens gradually take on the roles that will be expected of them in adulthood, learning to acquire the skills and manage the multiple demands that will allow them to move into the labor market, as well as to meet expectations regarding commitment to family, community, and citizenship.  |
| 10. Renegotiate relationships with adults in parenting roles          | Although the task of adolescence has sometimes been described as “separating” from parents and other caregivers, it is more widely seen now as adults and teens working together to negotiate a change in the relationship that accommodates a balance of autonomy and ongoing connection, with the emphasis on each depending in part on the family’s ethnic background.   |

\*Simpson, A. Rae (2001). Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action. Boston: Center for Health Communication, Harvard School of Public Health (*do not remove or separate from text of The Ten Tasks of Adolescence*)

## COMMUNICATING WITH ADOLESCENTS

- ❖ Timing is important
  - Time of day – when is best? Worst? Their time v your time?
  - Is youth stressed out, feeling okay, having a bad day?
  - Use teachable moments.
- ❖ Think before you speak
  - Take time before communicating if you are upset, angry
  - Remember the teen's perspective
  - Don't top their problem with yours – "One-Up Problem Solving"
    - You think that's bad, let me tell you when I was your age...
    - You think that's bad, let me tell you what I'm dealing with...
- ❖ Treat comments and communication seriously
- ❖ Stop talking and listen
- ❖ Ask questions
  - Provide ideas and options rather than answers and solutions
- ❖ Avoid distractions
- ❖ Volume and tone (avoid lecturing, raised voice, talking "to")
- ❖ Be open to new ideas
- ❖ Take notes
- ❖ Watch your non-verbal behavior, body language
  - Stop what you are doing
  - Give your full attention
  - Look at youth, make direct eye contact
  - Smile as much as possible
  - Use open gestures
- ❖ Use Active Listening Skills
  - Listen to message and underlying meaning

## COMMUNICATING AND WORKING WITH YOUTH

### Aspects of development that are challenging:

1.

2.

### Strategies for addressing these challenges:

1.

2.

### Ideas for communicating with teens:

1.

2.



## MAKING MISTAKES

One challenge in working with young adults is to recognize the need for adolescents to experience increasing levels of independence and the accompanying successes and failures in order to develop self-determination.

Some suggestions for using mistakes as teaching opportunities:

- Mistakes are a natural part of life.
  - The more responsibility we have, the more likely we *will* make mistakes.
  - Failures are stepping stones to success.
  - We learn by experimenting.
- Don't waste time trying to justify your mistakes.
  - Don't look for blame
- If you make a mistake that harms someone else, apologize with dignity.
  - Apologize in person (if possible)
  - Once, then move on
- Understand why the mistake occurred
  - Avoid repeating same mistakes



## PRACTICE TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH IN PLANNING

- Ask youth to identify the important people in their lives.
- Find out who the youth was close to in the past.
- Facilitate communication between the youth and adults who might become permanent connections for the youth.
- Teach the interpersonal relationship skills required to develop and maintain a support system.
- Empower young people to find their own permanent connections.
- Understand that youth may change their minds about returning home or adoption.
- Ask youth how they feel about having a family or support rather than asking about being adopted.
- Reassure youth that they will have choices in the process and that they will not have to proceed any further or faster than what they are willing to do.
- Provide youth with opportunities to develop relationships with mentors, either through formal mentoring programs or informal interactions.
- Encourage the youth's involvement in positive community activities.
- Provide opportunities for the youth to remain connected and/or become connected with his home community, tribe, and cultural group.
- Teach youth the skills needed to appropriately deal with their biological family.
- Make sure that youth understand all of their permanency options.
- Make sure that youth are actively involved in planning for their futures.
- **Do not let your youth leave foster care without having a positive, caring adult of their choice in their lives!**

(List compiled from: *Youth Involvement: Developing Leaders and Strengthening Communities*, Bruce Seinehart and *Tips for Talking with Teens*, National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development)

[http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/resources/publications/pdfs/youthfocus\\_permanency.doc](http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/resources/publications/pdfs/youthfocus_permanency.doc)

## MORE IDEAS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH

General strategies to get youth talking and involved in their own planning process include:

- Let them know you are able to JUST LISTEN (free of advice, judgment, lecturing)
- Remember your active listening skills
- Don't take over the problem
- Show respect for their ideas, opinions (even if you don't agree)
- Keep their confidence (if safe)
- Watch for opportunities when the teen is ready.
  - Youth want to talk at odd times – blurt out as leaving, late at night
  - NOT first thing in the morning!
  - Not on busiest days
- Small talks often rather than one huge talk
- Avoid asking a lot of questions
  - Especially “why” questions
- Don't get defensive when they make critical remarks about adults
- Apologize when you're wrong
- Provide feedback in straightforward way, but don't keep repeating
- Give clear messages (use I messages)
- Talk about yourself some, but not too much!
- Give them lots of praise and positive feedback when they do speak up and get involved, active.
- Others?

Activities include:

- Do something fun and relaxing with youth before a planning session
  - For example, play a game of Twenty Questions with youth as the player. General rules for 20 Questions: The player thinks of something and the others ask questions to try to guess what it is. In the original

game, the player could only answer yes, no, maybe, doubtful, irrelevant, etc. If others haven't guessed in 20 questions, player wins.

- Ask them to make a short video (most cameras and cell phones have video function)
- Have youth work on Life Planning ideas in pairs or small groups
- Have youth prepare a presentation or put on a skit to show what goals, dreams, plans are
- Have youth write a story or poem about his/her future
- Others?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## IDENTIFYING SUPPORTS

### In Pre-Planning Meeting, worker might ask:

“I’m going to go through your record very thoroughly to prepare for the Life Planning meeting. Do you want me to look for someone’s contact information? Is there someone you remember that you would like for me to find in the record?”

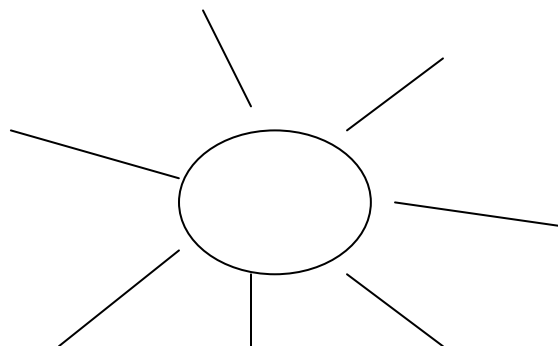
### Use the idea of a dinner party:

“If you were going to put together a dinner party of the most important people in your life, who would you invite? Who was been important in your life before?”

### Use the idea of an Advisory Board:

“An Advisory Board is a group of people you put together to help advise, plan, and guide you. Let’s think about who you would like to put on your own Advisory Board.”

### Construct an Ecomap or Ideamap:



### People Finder

- Extended family and fictive kin (not related by blood or marriage)
- 

- Who was there in the beginning?
- 

- Someone who attended a prior planning meeting or staffing
- 

- Anyone who called for or came looking for you
- 

- Past caregivers
- 

- People who have called asking about you
- 

- Past significant professionals
-

## MEETING FACILITATION TIPS

- ❖ Be prepared to keep group task-focused
- ❖ Encourage creative thinking
- ❖ Know how to build consensus
- ❖ Keep everyone involved
- ❖ Be patient!
- ❖ Use attending and active listening skills
  - Appropriate eye contact
  - Attentive body language
  - Vocal variation and interest
  - Attend to other people's body language cues
  - Listen and watch for underlying meaning of messages
  - Conveying understanding of total message
- ❖ Blend assertiveness with tact
- ❖ Recognize and deal with disruptive behavior
- ❖ Know yourself! What situations or agenda items might you find difficult to handle? Develop a plan or strategy to address if arises.
- ❖ Have a Plan B for when things do not go as planned.
- ❖ Try to "level the playing field".
  - Area Directors, attorneys, and therapists all bring different dynamics into the meeting and can upset the balance of "power". Actively engage all members and remind group members of the purpose of the meeting – make a meaningful Life Plan for Youth.
- ❖ If meeting is veering away from agenda or time frame, ask group's "permission" or input about the deviation.
- ❖ When it appears that the item being discussed is not being resolved or there are too many options to consider, try these steps:
  - Reflect back to the group what is going on, e.g., we seem to be having a hard time coming to an agreement about housing.

- Present the options, e.g., we can continue to discuss until we reach agreement or we could agree to table this and move on to the next topic and come back to it later.
- Ask what the group wants to do, e.g., what does the group want to do.



## PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING

- ✓ Work with youth to identify who will be invited to the meeting and assist the youth in sending out personal invitations
- ✓ Send a blank copy of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement with the Invitation to Family-Centered Meeting - CFS-590 (Staffing notice)
- ✓ Send an explanatory letter or note along with the Invitation to Family-Centered Meeting and blank copy of the Transitional Life Plan and include information relevant to the invitee.
  - For someone who the youth wishes to invite to a part of the meeting, share the general time frame with the person.
  - For someone who needs to be at the entire meeting, a brief explanation that this is a planning meeting and may take some time.
  - Inform the invitee that the planning meeting will be Youth-Centered
  - Prepare the participants:
    - to introduce himself/herself,
    - to say something positive about the youth, and
    - to say something about how long he or she has worked with youth
- ✓ Follow-up with the invitees with letter, email, telephone call.
- ✓ Plan for meeting details
  - Arrange for meeting space (consider someplace other than the DCFS office, if possible)
  - Plan for drinks, snacks
  - Paper, pen for each person present
  - Provide name badges or name tents
    - Use address labels for name badges
    - Use card stock for name tents
  - Plan to have a sign-in sheet (this is particularly important the more people who are invited and if people will be coming and going)
- ✓ Address transportation needs and day care arrangements
- ✓ Identify someone who will be able to take detailed notes (could be someone involved in the meeting or could be a co-worker)

- ✓ Prepare to facilitate the meeting
  - Thoroughly review case file and make notes for your own use
  - Review meeting facilitation pointers if needed
  - Set up pre-meeting conference with supervisor
    - Identify desired outcomes
    - Brainstorm strategies to address potential barriers within meeting, e.g., “negative” people, known conflicts among participants
  - Set up pre-meeting conference with Transitional Services Coordinator
  - Set up room so that all invitees can see one another easily (consider Youth at head of table)
- ✓ Prepare materials
  - Agenda
  - Copies of Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - Copies of confidentiality statement, if needed
  - Sign-in sheet
  - Copies of other materials, as needed
  - Ground rules or Guidelines (either posted or copies)
- ✓ Prepare the youth
  - Work with Youth to understand the process and structure for the meeting
  - Give youth copy of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement to begin making a draft of what he/she would like to address
  - Encourage Youth to prioritize areas, items to be discussed
    - Work with Youth to identify strategies to tackle “difficult” or “sticky” areas
- ✓ Determine how much youth understands about permanence
  - Be prepared to discuss permanence (broadly defined)
  - Concentrate on connections and belongingness
  - Remember to address permanence on an ongoing basis and at naturally occurring opportunities – don’t relegate discussion of permanence to a “staffing” situation

## **GUIDELINES FOR STRUCTURING TRANSITIONAL LIFE PLAN TEAM MEETING**

- I. Welcome (Set the tone) and Introduction
  - a. Thank everyone for coming
  - b. Clear statement of the purpose of the meeting
  - c. Youth-centered approach
  - d. Positive statement about youth
  - e. Request youth to identify people in the room and then each person can introduce him/herself (have name tents)
  - f. Each person present should be ready to make a positive statement regarding the youth
  - g. Orientation to the meeting location, if needed
  - h. Review the process (or flow) of the meeting
  - i. Guidelines for the discussion
- II. Information Gathering and Sharing
  - a. Brainstorming begins
  - b. Maintain focus on present and near future (1-3-6 months)
  - c. Maintain positive tone of staffing (meeting)
  - d. Ensure that topics are discussed thoroughly
- III. Documenting the Plan
  - a. Capture the information from the brainstorming into the categories of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - b. Notes on topics that need to be addressed further in future meetings
  - c. Maintain focus on the present and near future (1-3-6) months
  - d. Remember that the plan is subject to change
  - e. Agree on tasks and timeframes
- IV. Closing the Staffing (Meeting)
  - a. Review the specifics of the plan (Who, What, When, Where, How)
  - b. Discuss follow-up details (who will check in with whom about progress)
  - c. Meeting planner and/or Life Plan with own tasks
  - d. Distribution of the plan
  - e. Collect feedback from those present
  - f. Thank everyone for coming
- V. Monitoring and Follow-up
  - a. Set up mechanism and time table to check in with team members to follow-up
  - b. Immediately document team meeting results

*Adapted from Handbook for Family Team Conferencing Prepared by: The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, Montgomery, AL, 2001*

## Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition

★ Youth:                      Date of Birth: Age :                      Ethnicity:

Primary Worker                      Primary Worker's Phone #  
Transitional Coordinators Name:                      Transitional coordinators Phone #

**Life Plan Agreement – 6 month Timeline:**

**Date Needs Assessment completed:**

★ If I have not participated in my Transitional Life Plan before, I agree to participate now!

★ Based on current assessments, the following goals and activities meet my current needs.

Goal	Activity	Responsible Team Members	Planned Completion Date	Progress
Education				
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
Employment				
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
Health				
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
Housing				
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
Life Connections				
				Met Goal on Date_____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification

Youth's Signature:\_\_\_\_\_date: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Signatures (indicate role i.e. mentor, Foster Parent, AAL, FSW, etc) for persons agreeing to above plan:

---



---

## **Transitional Youth Services Resources**

### **Table of Contents**

<b>Policy VIII-A and VIII-B and VIII-C .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Policy VIII-A Transitional Youth Services	
Procedure VIII-A1: Referral for Transitional Services	
Procedure VIII-A2: Youth Transitional Plan and Life Plan	
Procedure VIII-A3: Interagency Support for Youth with Disabilities	
Policy VIII-B: Extended Foster Care	
Procedure VIII-B1: Extended Foster Care	
Policy VIII-C: After Care Services and Support	
Procedure VIII-C1:	
<b>Foster Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, Public Law 110-351</b>	
<b>(Summary) .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A.C.A § 9-27-363 Foster Youth Transition .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>NYTD 101 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Forms.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Forms: Printed from <a href="https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net">https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net</a>	
<hr/>	
Form #	Form Name
	Revision
	Date
CFS-0001	Referral for Transitional Service Support
CFS-0002	Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition
CFS-0003	Checklist for Youth Exiting Care
CFS-0004	Request for After Care Support
CFS-0035	TYS Coordinator Monthly Summary
CFS-0370	Residence Checklist for Youth in Extended Care
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
	1/1/2011
<hr/>	
<b>Life Plan and Agreement (Completed Sample) .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Transitional Service Categories Definitions.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Transitional Youth Service Supports Table .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>The DCFS Arkansas ETV Program .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Public Guardian for Adults Summary and Affidavits .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>AMP – Youth Participation .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Foster Club’s Transition Toolkit Title Page with web address .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>SOAR .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>FYI3 Sample Pages .....</b>	<b>64</b>

<b>Permanency Pact .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>National Foster Youth Advisory Council Recommendations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Universal Scholarship Application .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>CHRIS Tip Sheet.....</b>	<b>80</b>

## VIII. SERVICES TO PROVIDE OTHER PERMANENT LIVING SITUATIONS

### POLICY VIII-A: TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES

01/2011

The purpose of Transitional Youth Services (TYS) is to better prepare youth in DCFS custody, who are in an out-of-home placement or whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age 16 or after, for successful transition to adulthood and to ensure that youth have access to an array of resources. The Division of Children and Family Services shall ensure that each youth in foster care who reaches age 14, or who enters foster care at or after age 14, shall be provided the opportunity to take an active role in planning for his or her future. Youth entering foster care between the ages of 14 and 18 will be immediately referred to the Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Coordinator.

The Division shall:

- A. Provide the youth with the opportunity to be actively engaged in all case/client plans impacting his or her future, including, but not limited to a Transitional Plan and a Life Plan.
- B. Empower the youth with information regarding all available services and options and provide the youth with the opportunity to participate in services tailored to his or her individual needs and designed to enhance his or her ability to acquire the skills necessary to successfully enter adulthood.
- C. Assist the youth in developing and maintaining healthy relationships and life connections with nurturing adults who can be a resource and positive guiding influence in his or her life after leaving foster care.
- D. Provide the youth with basic information and documentation regarding his or her biological family and personal history.
- E. Provide the youth with information that relates to the health care needs of youth aging out of foster care, including options for health insurance after exiting care and the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the youth, if he or she becomes unable to participate in such decisions and does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions; provide the youth with the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law.
- F. Inform the youth of his or her right to stay in care until age 21.

Each youth shall be given the opportunity to create a Transitional Plan which encompasses all the life skills, resources, and future-planning for the youth's successful transition into adult life. The Transitional Plan will be created with the support of the youth's Transitional Team which will consist of adults whom the youth identifies as significant. The youth's primary Family Service Worker shall be responsible for the coordination of the youth's Transitional Team and is responsible for the Transitional Plan and case plan as reflected in the court report. The TYS Coordinator is an appropriate support for some of the youth's transitional plans and may serve on the Transitional Team if appropriate. Because APPLA is the least permanent goal for a youth, the case plan and Transitional Plan shall address life connections.

The Transitional Plan shall allow for client protection. If a youth is identified as legally impaired and likely to become endangered, the Transitional Plan shall include automatic referrals to Developmental Disabilities Services and/or Adult Protective Services as appropriate. For youth with significant mental health issues, the Transitional Plan shall consider appropriate referrals and applications for post-care services (e.g. adult SSI).

The youth and his or her attorney shall have the right to attend all staffings and to fully participate in the development of the Transitional Plan, to the extent that the youth is able to participate medically and developmentally.

#### Chafee Services

Each youth in DHS custody, age 14 or older, is eligible for Chafee services. All Chafee services are voluntary. Services provided are primarily education- and training-oriented and are intended to keep youth in school while they obtain life skills and participate in other life preparation activities and plans to promote a successful transition to adulthood.

Chafee provides support for three groups of the foster care population:

- A. Youth in foster care, beginning at age 14 and continuing until the youth completes high school or other secondary educational program, may receive services such as life skills assessment, basic life skills training, and other services such as tutoring that can be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Youth may choose to remain in care until the age of 21 and are eligible for Chafee services if they meet any of the following conditions:
  - a. Youth is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education.
  - b. Youth is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment.
  - c. Youth is employed for at least 80 hours per month.
  - d. Youth is incapable of doing any of the above described activities due to a medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan.
- C. If a youth was in foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and the foster care case is closed, he or she will be eligible for After Care services and support until age 21.

Chafee also provides support for youth whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age 16 or after. Such youth are eligible for ETV (Education Training Voucher) and may attend youth development activities and life skills classes.

Assessments begin at age 14 and transitional services may begin at age 14 for youth already in foster care. In cases where a youth younger than 14 needs life skills training, the DCFS Director or designee may grant a waiver for services.

DCFS shall provide, either directly or through contract, those services identified in the life skills assessment that are indicated to help the youth achieve independence. The case plan and/or Transitional Plan must identify and address the specific skill needs of each youth. Each youth age 14-17 receiving Transitional Services shall be assessed annually using an appropriate life skills assessment tool; however, an individualized assessment shall be conducted every six months to determine the youth's progress in acquiring basic life skills and the skills necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. Basic life skills will be assessed at each staffing held for a youth age 14 and older. When the youth turns 18, assessments will be highly individualized.

If a youth was in foster care on or after his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and was adopted before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he will be eligible for services until his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

While incarcerated youth (prison, jail, DYS custody) are ineligible for Chafee funding, the youth shall still be given the opportunity to plan for his or her future.

Opportunities shall be available for each foster parent caring for, or interested in caring for, a youth age 14 or older, and each Family Service Worker responsible for any youth, age 14 or older, in helping youth acquire basic life skills.



Within 30 days after the youth leaves foster care, the Division shall provide the youth the following:

- A. A full accounting of all funds held by the department to which he or she is entitled;
- B. Information on how to access the funds;
- C. When the funds will be available.

## **PROCEDURE VIII-A1: Referral for Transitional Services**

01/2011

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Complete the CFS-001: Referral for Transitional Services & Support on all youth entering foster care between the ages of 14 and 18. The CFS-001 will be completed also on youth who turn 14 while in foster care. All youth must be assessed for life skills within 30 days of entering care or within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Forward the completed and signed CFS-001 to the TYS Coordinator. The youth must sign the CFS-001 to be eligible for Chafee-specific services and support.
- C. If the youth chooses to participate, notify the TYS Supervisor and he or she will assign the TYS Coordinator, as appropriate.
- D. Assist the youth in completing a life skills assessment within 30 days of entering care or within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- E. After case plan is completed, initiate a Transitional Team Meeting and document on the Contact Screen and in the Transitional Plan as appropriate.
- F. Ensure that each youth age 14-17 is individually assessed every six months to:
  - 1) Review their Life Plan.
  - 2) Determine what life skills they have attained.
  - 3) Determine what life skills they still need.
- G. Ensure that each youth age 14-17 is assessed annually using the appropriate life skills assessment tool.
- H. Share the reassessment results with the TYS Coordinator and document the reasons for non-completion.
- I. Coordinate logistics for life skills training or other youth development activities with the foster parent or caretaker.
- J. Prepare the youth for Transitional Team meetings.
- K. Enter date into CHRIS in a timely manner.

If the youth makes a planned move (e.g. college) to another county, the supervisor in the primary county should communicate with the supervisor in the placement county before the youth moves.

If the youth makes an unplanned move to another county, the supervisor in the primary county should notify within 10 days, by email, the supervisor in the placement county. The receiving supervisor should then make secondary caseload assignments to the FSW and TYS Coordinator and directly notify them of the assignment. All workload assignments will go through the Coordinator's immediate supervisor and not the individual county supervisors.

If a youth is transferred to another Area/County not designated as primary, the FSW in the residence Area/County should:

- A. Assist in obtaining an assessment/reassessment if the date occurs while the client is in the other county.
- B. Transfer case files and all records of life-skills training sessions attended, skills acquired or mastered, and copies of assessment results to the FSW and TYS Coordinator in the secondary county to ensure that training needs and goals will continue to be addressed.
- C. Assist youth in completing the NYTD survey, if applicable.

The TYS Coordinator will:

- A. Update the Contact Screen in CHRIS each time contact is made with a youth. Contacts include group training sessions, face-to-face contact, phone contact, the youth's attendance in life-skills training, transitional team meetings, or ETV consultation. Indicate the title or content and information concerning the youth's participation.
- B. Complete Education and Employment Screens when appropriate.
- C. Develop life skills training resources.
- D. Complete the CFS-035: TYS Coordinator Monthly Summary.
- E. Submit the CFS-035 to the TYS Supervisor and the TYS Program Manager by the sixth day of the month.
- F. Coordinate and support transitional activities with the FSW when appropriate.
- G. Document the completion of the initial life skills assessment and any reassessments on the IL Checklist Screen, that the results were routed to the youth, FSW, and foster parents/provider in the Document Tracking screen.
- H. Document all transitional activities and services on the Client Contact Information Screen.

## PROCEDURE VIII-A2: Youth Transitional Plan and Life Plan

01/2011

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Develop a Transitional Plan with all youth in foster care between the ages of 14 and 21, and for all youth who turn 14 while in foster care, within 90 days of entering care or within 90 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Assist the youth in developing a Transitional Team to include individuals identified by the youth as significant (e.g. foster parents, bio family, AAL, CASA, mentors, therapists, TYS Coordinator, teachers, coaches).
- C. Review the Transitional Plan every six months to ensure consistency with education plan, case plan, and life plan and coordinate with the youth's school at least annually, until the youth exits foster care or secondary school.
- D. Determine, based on the youth's age, maturity, disabilities, and other factors, what shall be appropriate to include in the Transitional Plan.
- E. Determine at which point in the youth's development to include the following components: (All components must be present by the time the youth is 17 years old.)
  - 1) Education component
  - 2) Employment component
  - 3) Health component to include information on:
    - a. options for health insurance
    - b. documentation of a health care power of attorney or health care proxy if the youth chooses to designate one
  - 4) Housing component
  - 5) Lifelong Connections component
  - 6) Written confirmation that the youth has been informed of his right to stay in foster care after reaching 18 years of age for education, treatment, work, or other specific programs and services, including but not be limited to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and other transitional services
  - 7) The youth's court case record, including information on:
    - a. his or her biological family
    - b. foster care placement history

- c. tribal information, if applicable
  - d. whereabouts of siblings, if any, unless a court determines that release of information pertaining to siblings would jeopardize the safety or welfare of the sibling
- 8) List of significant individuals in the youth's life
- 9) Assistance in obtaining a free credit report and if the youth has a bad credit report because of identity theft, assistance in correcting the credit report
- F. Assist the youth or arrange for assistance in:
  - 1) Procuring life skills training.
  - 2) Completing applications for:
    - a. ARKids First, Medicaid, or assistance in obtaining other health insurance.
    - b. Referrals to transitional housing, if available, or assistance in securing other housing.
    - c. Assistance in obtaining employment or other financial support.
  - 3) Applying for admission to a college or university, or to a vocational training program, or another educational institution and in obtaining financial aid, when appropriate.
  - 4) Developing and maintaining relationships with individuals who are important to the youth and who may serve as a resource to the youth based on his or her best interests.
- G. Discuss with the youth the importance of designating someone to make health care decisions on their behalf when they exit from foster care, if they become unable, or if they do not have or do not want, an otherwise authorized relative to do so.
- H. Assist the youth in contacting the individual(s) who they would like to serve as their health care power of attorney or health care proxy and completing documentation authorizing a health care power of attorney or health care proxy. (DHS serves as the youth's health care power of attorney or health care proxy until the youth exits foster care.)
- I. With court permission and if the youth desires, facilitate visits between the youth and his relatives.
- J. Assist all youth in or entering foster care at age 14 or above or in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, whichever comes first, within 90 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday or 90 days after entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, in developing a Life Plan (CFS-002: Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition).
  - 1) The Life Plan shall be youth-driven.
  - 2) The Life Plan shall contain a concrete to-do list for youth, staff, and stakeholders.
  - 3) The Life Plan should be adopted by the Transitional Team within six months of the youth's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or entry into foster care, whichever comes first.
- K. Hold a final Transitional Team meeting within 90 days of youth's planned exit from foster care.
- L. Invite the youth's TYS Coordinator to the Transitional Team Meeting to discuss Chafee After Care support and ETV.
- M. At the final Transitional Team meeting, complete CFS-003: Checklist for Youth Exiting Care and provide the youth with the following and obtain his signature and that of his attorney ad litem confirming receipt:
  - 1) Social security card.
  - 2) Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record, if available or should have been available.
  - 3) Family photos in the possession of the Division.
  - 4) All the youth's health records for the time the youth was in foster care and any other medical records that were available or should have been available to the Division. A youth who chooses to remain in foster care after reaching age 18 may request that his or her health records remain private.
  - 5) All of the youth's educational records for the time the youth was in foster care and any other educational records that were available or should have been available to the Division.
  - 6) Driver's license and other picture identification.
  - 7) Transitional Resources Book and Life Book, if applicable.
  - 8) Life Plan.

- 9) If the youth elected not to designate a health care power of attorney or health care proxy before aging out of care (whether at 18 or 21), contact information for legal services if at a later point the youth decides to designate someone to make health care decisions on his or her behalf, if he or she becomes unable to participate in such decisions and does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions.
- 10) All information contained within the youth's case plan (current or former, as requested).
- 11) A list of all the youth's former placements.
- N. Document a current address and contact information for youth who reside outside the foster home in order to study, work, or for any other reason. This information must be kept current.
- O. Within 72 hours of case closure, notify the Eligibility Unit of the case closing and provide the Trust Coordinator with any information requested.

The Eligibility Unit Trust Coordinator will, within 30 days after the youth leaves foster care, provide the youth with the following information:

- A. A full accounting of all funds held by the department to which he or she is entitled;
- B. How to access the funds;
- C. When the funds will be available.

## **PROCEDURE VIII-A3: Interagency Support for Youth with Disabilities**

01/2011

In order to promote continuity of care for youth with disabilities, Adult Protective Services (APS), DCFS, Division of Youth Services (DYS), Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDS), and Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that describes each Division's roles and responsibilities.

DCFS will:

- A. Arrange an interagency case staffing and initiation of transition plan following youth's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Arrange an interagency case staffing within 30 days to include PACE determination and DD diagnosis identified for individuals taken into custody after age 14.
- C. Arrange an interagency review every six months for youth likely to require state custody status as an adult.

APS will:

- A. Review plan and identify issues requiring clarification or issues that might have been omitted and request this information from DCFS.
- B. Participate in case staffing and transition plan review following client's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

APS, DCFS, DHS, and OCC will apprise court of transition plan.

APS and DDS will review transition plan and arrange appropriate placement prior to client's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**POLICY VIII-B: EXTENDED FOSTER CARE**

01/2011

Youth may choose to remain in foster care past the age of 18 for education, treatment, work, or other programs and services as determined appropriate by their Transitional Team. Board payments for IV-E eligible youth will be made through title IV-E funds. Board payments for youth who are not IV-E eligible will be paid using State General Revenue funds.

In order to be eligible for extended foster care, youth must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Youth must have been in foster care at or before age 17, OR
2. Youth must have entered care at age 17 or after due to dependency-neglect, OR
3. Youth must have entered foster care at age 17 or after with a prior dependency-neglect status.

A copy of the youth's entire record will be made available to him or her at no cost at the final Transitional Team meeting which will occur within 90 days of youth's planned exit from care.

**PROCEDURE VIII-BI: Extended Foster Care**

01/2011

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Consider the following issues with the youth:
  - 1) The school the youth will attend
  - 2) Living arrangements
  - 3) Choosing a sponsor
  - 4) Budgeted income/expenses
  - 5) Amount of board payment
  - 6) Start-up items
  - 7) Transportation needs
  - 8) Continued life-skills training
  - 9) Support needed to help youth remain in school
  - 10) Designating a health care power of attorney or health care proxy (if not already determined before entering extended foster care).
- B. Assist the youth in locating and choosing a sponsor who may be the youth's out-of-home provider, attorney ad litem, apartment manager/owner, or a volunteer from the community.
- C. Approve the sponsor chosen by the youth.
- D. Notify the TYS Coordinator of the youth's sponsor.
- E. Assist the youth and his or her Transitional Team in determining appropriate housing and needed support for the first school year. (If youth intends to reside with sponsor, he or she must be an approved placement.)
- F. Complete CFS-370: Residence Checklist for Youth.
- G. Notify Resource Worker to initiate the youth's monthly board payments when residence is selected.
- H. Develop a budget with the youth and share it with the Transitional Team.
- I. Visit the youth face-to-face at least once a month.
- J. Obtain approval for less than twice-monthly visits from the County Supervisor, if appropriate.
- K. Maintain monthly contacts with the youth's sponsor. Contacts may be by telephone.

The youth's sponsor will, as appropriate:

- A. Attend and participate in Team Meetings.

- B. Assist the youth in selecting the independent living residence.
- C. Assist the youth with managing their budget if selected as board payment payee.
- D. Maintain regular contact with the youth.

## **POLICY VIII-C: AFTER CARE SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

01/2011

Chafee funds can be used to provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age and who have not attained 21 years of age. These services are called After Care. The youth must have been in foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and not currently in DHS custody to be eligible for after care services and support.

In order to be eligible for after care, youth must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Youth must have been in foster care at or before age 17, OR
2. Youth must have entered care at age 17 or after due to dependency-neglect, OR
3. Youth must have entered foster care at age 17 or after with a prior dependency-neglect status.

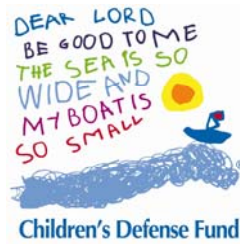
Additionally, a youth must have a budget and a plan that includes participation in education, employment, training, or treatment in order to be eligible for after care.

After care support is generally limited to \$500 in any one month and may be requested for a total of \$2000. After care support may include expenditures for education or training programs, housing, insurance, housing set-up, transportation, utility bills, or utility deposits. After care support is paid to the provider, not the youth. Reimbursement may be made to the youth if documentation of the expense is provided. After care support does not include amounts available through ETV. Youth eligible for after care may also participate in life skills classes.

## **PROCEDURE VIII-CI: After Care and Follow Up**

The TYS Coordinator will:

- A. Work with the youth requesting after care support. Request will be made via CFS-004: Request for After Care Support.
- B. Reopen the youth's closed child protective service case and assign the TYS Coordinator as the primary worker.
- C. Select Independent Living Program as the case type on the Case Summary Screen.
- D. Complete the Contact Screen for all contacts with youth, and update as appropriate.
- E. Complete Education and Employment screens and update as appropriate.
- F. Update Client Contact Information as appropriate.
- G. Document in the Client Contact Information Screen, the type and extent of financial assistance to be provided.
- H. Assist the youth in selecting a residence that is appropriate for his or her immediate needs, if needed.
- I. Complete a CFS-370: Residence Checklist for Youth to assure the residence and location are acceptable and document in the Document Tracking screen in CHRIS.
- J. Provide the youth with available alternatives for meeting their immediate housing needs, if appropriate.
- K. Recommend and assist in arranging for personal or community support as requested.
- L. Assist the youth in applying for assistance if he or she wishes to start or continue a post-secondary educational program.
- M. Document purchase requests in the Document Tracking screen, and if approved, document in Client Contact Information Screen. Payment is not made directly to the youth, except for approved travel reimbursement.
- N. Forward after care support requests to Financial Support Unit at least two weeks before payment is due.
- O. Maintain monthly contact with the youth.



## **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R.6893)** **Summary**

*The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893/P.L. 110-351) will help hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. Additionally, it will extend federal support for youth to age 21. The act will also offer for the first time many American Indian children important federal protections and support.*

**The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act provides important supports for children and youth in foster care by:**

### **Ensuring Permanent Placements with Relatives**

- **Notice to relatives (Sec. 103).** The act would require state agencies to exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult grandparents and other adult relatives of a child within 30 days after the child is removed from his or her home. It will help grandparents and other relatives get involved in children's care early on. The act also allows child welfare agencies to obtain state and federal child support data, including information to help locate children's parents and other relatives.
- **Kinship guardianship assistance payments for children living in foster care with relatives (Sec. 101).** The act gives states the option to use federal Title IV-E funds for kinship guardianship payments for children cared for by relative foster parents who are committed to caring for these children permanently when they leave foster care. The children must be eligible for federal foster care maintenance payments while in the home of the relative and must reside with the relative for at least six consecutive months in foster care to be eligible for the kinship guardianship assistance payment. The children who are eligible are those for whom returning home and adoption are ruled out and who likely would otherwise remain in foster care until they "aged out" of the system. Children 14 and older must be consulted about the kinship guardianship arrangement. Siblings may be placed in the same home and receive support even if some of them are not otherwise eligible. The kinship guardianship assistance payment rate for these children must not exceed the foster care payment that would have been paid had the child remained in a foster family home. Children eligible for these payments are also automatically eligible for Medicaid, as are children in foster care and those who receive adoption assistance payments. The act also clarifies that children who leave foster care after age 16 for kinship guardianship (or adoption) are eligible for independent living services and makes them eligible for education and training vouchers.



- **Licensing standards for relatives (Sec. 104).** The act clarifies that states may waive non-safety licensing standards on a case-by-case basis in order to eliminate barriers to placing children safely with relatives in licensed homes. These standards include requirements such as mandatory square footage and minimum numbers of bedrooms or bathrooms per person. It also requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to submit a report to Congress within two years that examines state licensing standards, states' use of case-by-case waivers, and the effect of these waivers on children in foster care. The report must also review the reasons relative foster family homes may not be able to be licensed, and recommend administrative or legislative actions to allow more children in foster care to be safely placed in foster family homes with relatives and be eligible for federal support.

### **Increasing Adoptive Families for Children**

- **Federal support for adoption assistance for more children with special needs (Sec. 402).** By "de-linking" a child's eligibility for federal adoption assistance payments from outdated AFDC income requirements, the act increases the number of children with special needs who can be adopted with federal support. Currently a child in foster care may be eligible for federal adoption assistance only if the home the child is removed from has an income that meets the state's AFDC income eligibility standard in place on July 16, 1996, without taking into account inflation. Not only is this standard outdated, but linking a child's eligibility for adoption assistance to the income of the child's parents whose parental rights were subsequently terminated makes no sense on basic fairness grounds. Eligibility should be based on the child's needs. The act would eliminate this income eligibility requirement for adoption assistance.

In addition, children who are eligible for SSI, based solely on the medical and disability requirements, would automatically be considered children with special needs and eligible for adoption assistance without regard to the SSI income requirements.

This act requires that savings resulting from these new Title IV-E eligibility rules must be invested in services (including post-adoption services) provided under Parts B and E of Title IV. The expansion of children eligible for federal adoption assistance payments will be phased in over nine years, with older children and those who have spent at least 60 consecutive months in care, and their siblings, being eligible first. As children are phased in, those children with special needs who are involuntarily or voluntarily placed with or relinquished to the care of a licensed private child placement agency or Indian tribal organization, as well as those in the care of public state or local agencies, will also be eligible for adoption assistance.

- **Expanding the Adoption Incentives Program (Sec. 401).** The act enhances incentives in current law to promote the adoption of children from foster care. It renews the Adoption Incentive Grant Program for an additional five years, updates to FY 2007 the adoption baseline above which incentive payments are made, doubles the incentive payments for adoptions of children with special needs and older children adoptions, and gives states 24 months to use the adoption incentive payments. The act also permits states to receive an additional payment if the state's adoption rate exceeds its highest recorded foster child adoption rate since 2002.

- **Making older children who exit foster care eligible for additional supports (Sec. 101).** H.R. 6893 clarifies that children 16 and older who are adopted from foster care or who exit foster care to live with a relative guardian are eligible for independent living services. Under previous law, children adopted from foster care after age 16 are already eligible for education and training vouchers.
- **Outreach about the adoption tax credit (Sec. 403).** The act helps to ensure that children in foster care benefit from the adoption tax credit. Research shows that the majority of taxpayers taking advantage of the federal adoption tax credit had not adopted through public child welfare agencies but, rather, through private agencies or attorneys. The act requires states to inform all people who are adopting or are known to be considering adopting a child in the custody of the state that they are potentially eligible for the adoption tax credit.

### **Maintaining Sibling Ties and Other Family Connections**

- **Placing siblings together (Sec. 206).** The act helps promote permanent family connections for children by requiring states to make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same foster care, kinship guardianship, or adoptive placement, unless doing so would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings. If siblings are not placed together, the state must make reasonable efforts to provide frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings, unless this interaction would be contrary to a sibling's safety or well-being.
- **Family Connection Grants (Sec. 102).** The act authorizes a new grant program in Subpart 1 of Title IV-B for activities designed to connect children in foster care (or at risk of entering foster care) with family. Funds can be used for: 1) kinship navigator programs; 2) intensive family-finding efforts; 3) family group decision-making meetings for children in the child welfare system, with special attention to children exposed to domestic violence; or 4) residential family substance abuse treatment programs. Many of these activities would help grandparents and other relatives who are caring or want to care for their relative children. The act would guarantee \$15 million a year for competitive, matching grants to state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and nonprofit organizations that have experience working with children in foster care or kinship care. \$5 million of these funds would be reserved each year for grants for kinship navigator programs. Funds would also be set aside for evaluation and technical assistance.

### **Improving Outcomes for Older Youth in Foster Care**

- **Continuing federal support for children in foster care after age 18 (Sec. 201).** Compared to youth in the general population, youth who have experienced foster care are more likely to become homeless, incarcerated, and unemployed when they age out of care. They also are more likely to have physical, developmental, and mental health challenges. Unlike youth outside the child welfare system, most youth in foster care lose the only support system they know when they reach 18. There is evidence that youth

who remain in foster care to age 21 have better outcomes when they leave care. The act allows states, at their option, to provide care and support to youth in foster care until the age of 19, 20, or 21 provided that the youth is either 1) completing high school or an equivalency program; 2) enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school; 3) participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment; 4) employed for at least 80 hours per month; or 5) incapable of doing any of these activities due to a medical condition. The protections and requirements currently in place for younger children in foster care would continue to apply for youth ages 18-21. Youth ages 18-21 could be placed in a supervised setting in which they are living independently, as well as in a foster family home or group home. States could also extend adoption assistance and/or guardianship payments on behalf of youth ages 19, 20, or 21.

- **Helping older youth successfully transition from foster care to independence (Sec. 202).** Approximately half of all young people between the ages of 18-24 still live with their parents. This is not an option for youth who are in foster care – once they leave foster care, they are on their own. The act requires child welfare agencies to help youth make this transition to adulthood by requiring, during the 90-day period immediately before a youth exits from care at 18, 19, 20, or 21 that the child’s caseworker, and other representatives as appropriate, helps the child develop a personal transition plan. The plan must be as detailed as the child chooses and include specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentoring, continuing support services, work force supports and employment services.

### **Improving the Quality of Staff Working with Children in the Child Welfare System**

- **Extending federal training to more staff (Sec. 203).** The act recognizes the importance of a quality workforce to children’s well-being. It expands the availability of federal Title IV-E training dollars to cover training of staff not only in public agencies but in private child welfare agencies, as well as court personnel, attorneys, guardian ad litem, and court appointed special advocates. Title IV-E training dollars could also be used to train prospective relative guardians in addition to foster and adoptive parents. Funding for this new training is phased in over 5 years.

### **Increasing Access to Federal Funding to Promote Better Outcomes for Indian Children**

- **Allowing Indian tribes direct access to federal foster care and adoption assistance funds (Sec. 301).** Currently, Indian tribes cannot access Title IV-E funds to administer their own foster care or adoption assistance programs. They must have an agreement with a state government to access IV-E funds. More than half of the federally recognized tribes do not have such an agreement. The act allows states and tribes to continue to operate or create Tribal/State agreements to administer the IV-E program. However, it also creates the option for tribes or tribal consortia to directly access and administer IV-E funds. This provision increases resources for Indian children and extends the IV-E protections to more Indian children. The act would also allow tribes to access a portion of the state’s Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds and require the tribe to provide independent living services for tribal youth in the state. To support this initiative, the act requires the Secretary of the Department of Health and

Human Services to provide technical assistance, implementation services, and grants to assist tribes in the transition to administering their own programs.

### **Addressing Children's Health and Education Needs**

- **Developing health oversight and coordination plans (Sec. 205).** The act requires states to develop, in coordination and collaboration with the state Medicaid agency and in consultation with pediatricians and other experts, a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for any child in foster care. The plan must describe how initial and follow-up health screenings will be provided, health needs identified will be monitored and treated, and medical information will be updated and appropriately shared with providers. The plan must also detail the steps that are or will be taken to ensure continuity of health care services, including the possibility of establishing a medical home for every child in care; and what will be done to ensure the oversight of prescription medications, including psychotropic drugs.
- **Promoting educational stability (Sec. 204).** Research shows that, on average, each change in school placement for a child results in a loss of six months of educational progress. More than one-third of children in foster care have experienced four changes in school placement. The act would require state child welfare agencies to improve educational stability for children in foster care by coordinating with local education agencies to ensure that children remain in the school they are enrolled in at the time of placement into foster care, unless that would not be in the child's best interests. If it is not in the child's best interest, the state must ensure immediate enrollment in a new school with all of the educational records of the child provided to that new school. The act also increases the amount of federal funding that may be used to cover education-related transportation costs for children in foster care. In addition, the act requires states to provide assurances in their Title IV-E state plans that every school-age child in foster care, and every school-age child receiving an adoption assistance or subsidized guardianship payment, is enrolled as a full-time elementary or secondary school student or has completed secondary school.

*For further information on H.R.6893, please contact Beth Davis-Pratt of the Child Welfare and Mental Health Team at the Children's Defense Fund at [edavis-pratt@childrensdefense.org](mailto:edavis-pratt@childrensdefense.org) or 202-662-3629 or Tiffany Conway at the Center for Law and Social Policy at [tconway@clasp.org](mailto:tconway@clasp.org) or 202-906-8026.*

*October 14, 2008*

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

Act 391 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas  
87th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2009

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 359

By: Senators Madison, Salmon, Teague, J. Key, D. Johnson, Bryles, R. Thompson, P. Malone, Glover, Whitaker

By: Representative Powers

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS FOSTER YOUTH  
TRANSITIONAL PLAN; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS FOSTER  
YOUTH TRANSITIONAL PLAN.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 9, Chapter 27, Subchapter 3 is amended to add a new section to read as follows:

§ 9-27-363. Foster youth transition.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Every juvenile in foster care should have a family for a lifetime. However, the reality is that too many juveniles who are in foster care reach the age of majority without being successfully reunited with their biological families and without the security of permanent homes.

(2) A child in foster care who is approaching the age of majority shall be provided the opportunity to be actively engaged in the planning of his or her future.

(3) The Department of Human Services shall:

(A) Include the child in the process of developing a plan to transition the child into adulthood;

(B) Empower the child with information about all of the



1 options and services available;

2 (C) Provide the child with the opportunity to participate  
 3 in services tailored to his or her individual needs and designed to enhance  
 4 his or her ability to receive the skills necessary to enter into adulthood;

5 (D) Assist the child in developing and maintaining healthy  
 6 relationships with nurturing adults who can be a resource and positive  
 7 guiding influence in his or her life after he or she leaves foster care; and

8 (E) Provide the child with basic information and  
 9 documentation regarding his or her biological family and personal history.

10 (b) The Department of Human Services shall develop a transitional plan  
 11 with every juvenile in foster care not later than the juvenile's seventeenth  
 12 birthday or within ninety (90) days of entering a foster care program for  
 13 juveniles who enter foster care at seventeen (17) years of age or older. The  
 14 plan shall include but not be limited to written information and confirmation  
 15 concerning:

16 (1) The juvenile's right to stay in foster care after reaching  
 17 eighteen (18) years of age for education, treatment, or work and specific  
 18 programs and services, including but not be limited to the John H. Chafee  
 19 Foster Care Independence Program and other transitional services; and

20 (2) The juvenile's case, including his or her biological family,  
 21 foster care placement history, tribal information if applicable, and the  
 22 whereabouts of siblings, if any, unless a court determines that release of  
 23 information pertaining to siblings would jeopardize the safety or welfare of  
 24 the sibling;

25 (c) The department shall assist the juvenile with:

26 (1) Completing applications for:

27 (A) ARKids First, Medicaid, or assistance in obtaining  
 28 other health insurance;

29 (B) Referrals to transitional housing, if available, or  
 30 assistance in securing other housing; and

31 (C) Assistance in obtaining employment or other financial  
 32 support;

33 (2) Applying for admission to a college or university, or to a  
 34 vocational training program, or another educational institution and in  
 35 obtaining financial aid, when appropriate; and

36 (3) Developing and maintaining relationships with individuals

1 who are important to the juvenile and who may serve as a resource to the  
2 juvenile based on his or her best interests.

3 (d) A juvenile and his or her attorney shall fully participate in the  
4 development of his or her transitional plan, to the extent that the juvenile  
5 is able to participate medically and developmentally.

6 (e) Before closing a case, the department shall provide a juvenile in  
7 foster care who reaches eighteen (18) years of age or before leaving foster  
8 care, whichever is later, his or her:

9 (1) Social security card;

10 (2) Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record,  
11 if available or should have been available to the department;

12 (3) Family photos in the possession of the department;

13 (4)(A) All the juvenile's health records for the time the  
14 juvenile was in foster care and any other medical records that were available  
15 or should have been available to the department.

16 (B) A juvenile who reaches eighteen (18) years of age and  
17 remains in foster care shall not be prevented from requesting that his or her  
18 health records remain private; and

19 (5) All of the juvenile's educational records for the time the  
20 juvenile was in foster care and any other educational records that were  
21 available or should have been available to the department.

22 (f) Within thirty (30) days after the juvenile leaves foster care, the  
23 department shall provide the juvenile a full accounting of all funds held by  
24 the department to which he or she is entitled, information on how to access  
25 the funds, and when the funds will be available.

26 (g) The department shall not request a circuit court to close a family  
27 in need of services case or dependency-neglect case involving a juvenile in  
28 foster care until the department complies with this section.

29 (h) The department shall provide notice to the juvenile and his or her  
30 attorney before a hearing in which the department or another party requests a  
31 court to close the case is held.

32 (i)(1) A circuit court shall continue jurisdiction over a juvenile who  
33 has reached eighteen (18) years of age to ensure compliance with this  
34 section.

35 (2) This section does not limit the discretion of a circuit  
36 court to continue jurisdiction for other reasons as provided for by law.

1           (3) A court may terminate jurisdiction upon a showing that:

2                   (A) The department has complied with this section; or

3                   (B) The juvenile has refused the services.

4  
5                               **APPROVED: 3/11/2009**  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36



# NYTD 101

## What is NYTD?

In 1999, Congress established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). This program gives States flexible funding to assist youth in transitioning out of foster care. The law also requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a data collection system to track the independent living services provided to youth and to develop outcomes that measure states' success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living. To meet this requirement, the National Youth in Transition Database, or NYTD, was created.

## What data will be collected?

When NYTD is implemented, States will be asked to report the IL services provided to all youth in thirteen broad categories:

- **independent living needs assessment**
- **academic support**
- **post-secondary educational support**
- **career preparation**
- **employment programs or vocational training**
- **housing education and home management training**
- **budget and financial management**
- **health education and risk prevention**
- **family support and healthy marriage education;**
- **mentoring**
- **supervised independent living**
- **room and board financial assistance**
- **education financial assistance**

States will also be expected to survey certain youth at ages 17, 19 and 21 about the following outcomes:

- **financial self-sufficiency**
- **experience with homelessness**
- **educational attainment**
- **positive adult connections**
- **high-risk behavior**
- **access to health insurance**

## What is happening with NYTD now?

In February of 2008, States received a notice (called the Final Rule) about the data to collect and that collection would begin on October 1, 2010. The first data submission is due by May 15, 2011. States are now determining the best way to collect the data that is required by NYTD.

## What happens if States don't collect the data?

States are required to get at least 80 % of youth in foster care and at least 60 % of youth who have left care to participate in the youth outcomes survey. If States do not comply with (or meet) the data standards, they can be penalized between one and five percent of their annual Chafee Foster Care Independence Program allotment.

## Why should you be involved?

This is your chance to make sure that IL services and outcomes for youth in your state are counted. Your involvement in NYTD will encourage your peers to participate, positively impact your own life, and, ultimately, improve services for younger youth in your state. We know that the outcomes of many youth who leave care are not always that positive. By participating and being active with NYTD, you can help change those outcomes. Get involved with NYTD!

**Developed by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development**

## What is your role?

*Marketing NYTD* – Get involved in spreading the word about NYTD. Talk about NYTD at teen conferences, youth advisory boards, trainings for child welfare professionals, and other places that involve the youth or caseworker.

*The NYTD Process* – Get involved with your State’s NYTD Team. Volunteer to complete a NYTD interview to understand the procedure better. Remember, data will be collected at ages 17, 19, and 21. You can be someone who helps to locate youth to interview. You can also interview current and former foster youth for the NYTD data collection as young people from care are more receptive to their peers in care rather than caseworkers.

*Staff Training* – Help train former foster youth and caseworkers on strategies for locating and engaging youth in the NYTD data collection process. Most caseworkers and other child welfare professionals may not have the technology savvy skills you may have when it comes to contacting and locating youth through popular social networks such as Facebook and MySpace.

## Glossary of NYTD Terms

**ACF** – Administration for Children and Families

**Baseline Population** – For NYTD purposes, each youth who is in foster care as defined in 45 CFR 1355.20 and reaches his or her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday during FFY 2011, and such youth who reach a 17<sup>th</sup> birthday during every third year thereafter.

**Final Rule** – Established the National Youth in Transition Database in February 2008.

**Follow-up Population** – Each youth who reaches his or her 19<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in a FFY and participated in the State’s outcomes data collection as part of the baseline population, as specified in 45 CFR 1356.82(a)(2). The follow-up population may be subject to sampling, as specified in 45 CFR 1356.84. A youth who participated in the data collection at age 17, but not 19 for a reason other than being deceased remains a part of the follow-up population at age 21. A youth is in the follow-up population as described regardless of the youth’s foster care status at ages 19 or 21.

**NYTD** – Acronym for the National Youth in Transition Database.

**Report Period(s)** – NYTD requires semi-annual reporting. The six month report periods are from October 1 to March 31, and April 1 to September 30. States must submit these files to ACF within 45 days of the end of the reporting period (i.e., by May 15 and November 14).

**Reporting Population** – The reporting population is comprised of youth in the served, baseline, and follow-up populations depending on the reporting period. These sub-populations are described elsewhere in this document.

**Served Population** – Each youth who receives an independent living service paid for or provided by the CFCIP agency during the reporting (six month) period is part of the served population.

**John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)** –CFCIP provides States with greater funding and flexibility to carry out programs which assist youth in making the transition from foster care to self sufficiency. It was created with the enactment of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.

**Sources:** [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/about\\_nytd.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/about_nytd.htm)

**Developed by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development**

<b>Form #</b>	<b>Form Name</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>
<b>CFS-0001</b>	Referral for Transitional Service Support	1/1/2011
<b>CFS-0002</b>	Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition	1/12011
<b>CFS-0003</b>	Checklist for Youth Exiting Care	1/1/2011
<b>CFS-0004</b>	Request for After Care Support	1/1/2011
<b>CFS-0035</b>	TYS Coordinator Monthly Summary	1/1/2011
<b>CFS-0370</b>	Residence Checklist for Youth in Extended Care	1/1/2011



**Arkansas Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Children and Family Services**  
**Referral for Transitional Services & Support**

TO: \_\_\_\_\_ (TYS Coordinator) Area: \_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ (FSW) Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_  
Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
SSN: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent / Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY FAMILY SERVICE WORKER:** (Check all boxes and provide all the information that applies.)

1. Youth has been informed about Transitional Services? ..... ☐ YES ☐ NO
  2. Youth has a Transitional Team? ..... ☐ YES ☐ NO
  3. Youth is at least 14 years old, and is neither currently incarcerated, nor on a trial home visit? ☐ YES ☐ NO
  4. Youth wants to participate? ..... ☐ YES ☐ NO
  5. Youth was given a copy of PUB-50: Be Your Own Advocate? ..... ☐ YES ☐ NO
  6. The Life Skills Assessment has been completed? ..... ☐ YES ☐ NO
- If Yes, date assessment was completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Assessment Score: \_\_\_\_%

**COMMENTS:**

**YOUTH IS BEING REFERRED FOR (Select only those that apply.):**

- ☐ Life Skills Classes
- ☐ Assessment & Reassessment
- ☐ Benefits (household start-up, post-secondary tuition, etc.)
- ☐ Transitional Team Participation
- ☐ Support for Youth's Transitional Goal of Employment or Education

Family Service Worker Name	Family Service Worker Signature	Date
Youth's Signature ( <b>REQUIRED</b> )	Date	

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE TYS SUPERVISOR:**

Youth is approved for the following:

- ☐ Life Skills Classes
- ☐ Assessment & Reassessment
- ☐ Benefits (household start-up, post-secondary tuition, etc.)
- ☐ Transitional Team Participation
- ☐ Support for Youth's Transitional Goal of Employment or Education

TYS Supervisor Name	TYS Supervisor Signature	Date
---------------------	--------------------------	------

## Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_  
 TYS Coordinator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Life Plan Agreement – 6 month Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Needs Assessment completed: \_\_\_\_\_

If I have not participated in my Life Plan before, I agree to participate now!  
 Based on current assessments, the following goals and activities meet my current needs.

Goal	Activity	Responsible Team Members	Planned Completion Date	Progress
<b>Education</b>				
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
<b>Employment</b>				
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
<b>Housing</b>				
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
<b>Life Connections</b>				
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification

# Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition

I understand I have the right to remain in foster care for one of the reasons listed below. While it may change, my current goal is

Education ☐ Employment ☐ Treatment ☐ or Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_.

Youth’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Transitional Team Members and Role (mentor, foster parent, AAL, FSW, etc)

Signature	Role	Date



**Arkansas Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Children and Family Services**  
**Checklist for Youth Exiting Care**

(This form is to be completed within 90 days of youth's planned exit date.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_ Gender: \_\_

Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Youth's Life Connections:**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

1. ☐ Youth has completed a Transitional Plan and a budget.
2. ☐ Youth has completed the needed life skills classes.
3. ☐ Youth has been informed of his/her right to remain in care until age 21 and it is documented.
4. ☐ Youth has been given a copy of the court report.
5. ☐ Youth has identified at least three life connections.
6. ☐ Youth has obtained a free credit report at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).
7. ☐ Youth has received information regarding health care proxy/power of attorney and assistance was provided by OCC, if youth requested.
8. ☐ Youth has completed an application for ARKids First, Medicaid, or has received assistance in obtaining health insurance.
9. ☐ Youth has a housing plan and has received assistance in securing housing, if requested.
10. ☐ Youth has received assistance or support in obtaining employment, if requested.
11. ☐ Youth has applied to college, university, vocational training program, or another educational institution according to their individual Transitional Plan as needed.
12. ☐ Youth has been given information about financial aid and/or applied for it (ETV, FAFSA, etc.).
13. ☐ Youth has developed a Life Plan and has a copy of it.
14. ☐ Youth has his or her Transitional Resources book and Life Book, if applicable.
15. ☐ Youth has an email address.
16. ☐ Youth has a 30-90 day supply of any medication currently prescribed.
17. ☐ Youth knows who his or her Primary Care Physician is, how to contact PCP, and how to access services.
18. ☐ Youth has a list of service providers in their community.

19. ☐ Youth has been informed of any benefits they may be eligible for due to their status in foster care, including ETV program ([www.statevoucher.org](http://www.statevoucher.org)).
20. ☐ Youth has been encouraged to subscribe for free to FosterClub ([www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com)). (If benefits for Aftercare change, FosterClub sends notices to each subscriber.)
21. ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth has received a copy of the following:

1. ☐ Social Security card
2. ☐ Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record
3. ☐ Family photos in the possession of the Division
4. ☐ All health and/or medical records
5. ☐ All educational records
6. ☐ Driver's license and any other photo identification
7. ☐ All information contained in the youth's Case Plan (current or former, as requested)
8. ☐ A list of all the youth's former placements

Please document any other information, referrals, and/or services provided to the youth who is declining extended foster care or to youth aging out of care at age 21.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have received assistance and support in developing a personalized transitional plan that includes specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors, and workforce supports and employment services.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth's Signature (Required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
FSW's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
FSW's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYS Coordinator's Name (if appropriate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYS Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





**Arkansas Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Children and Family Services**  
**Request for After Care Support**

TO: \_\_\_\_\_ (TYS Coordinator) Area: \_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ (FSW) Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_ Gender: \_

Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Client #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SSN: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

Name of Youth's Life Connection: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

The above named youth is requesting After Care Support. In order to be eligible, the youth must meet the following requirements.

1. Youth must have been in foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday **OR** adopted **OR** placed in permanent guardianship, on or after his or her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. Youth must be between the ages of 18 and 21 and must request After Care **before** the age of 21.
3. Youth must have a budget and a plan that includes participation in education, employment, training, or treatment.

Please see POLICY VIII-C for guidance on how After Care Support can be used.

☐ Case Assigned to Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Referring Supervisor's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Referring Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth's Signature (Required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYS Coordinator's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYS Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

[illegible]



Arkansas Department of Human Services  
Division of Children and Family Services

Residence Checklist for Youth

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_ Gender: \_\_  
Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
SSN: - - Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) -  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_ Zip: - -

**TYPE RESIDENCE:** ☐ Apartment ☐ Duplex ☐ Dormitory ☐ House ☐ Other

**IS THERE REASONABLE ACCESS TO:**

Yes	No	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Churches
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Libraries
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grocery Stores

**DOES THE YOUTH'S RESIDENCE COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING?**

Yes	No	N/A	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the youth have an escape plan in case of a fire?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is building appropriate, safe, comfortable, uncongested, pleasant and homelike?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is building kept repaired, safe, in clean condition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If within the same building, are youth's living quarters separated from others?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the youth housed with someone else? If yes, identify whom: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the youth or housemate smoke?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the youth have adequate bath and toilet facilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the temperature of the youth's living quarters fall within a comfortable range?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do all rooms used by youth have adequate ventilation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is lighting adequate?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a working telephone (this includes cell phone) accessible to youth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is sewage disposal system approved by city or Health Department?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is water supply from city or approved by Health Department?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there adequate hot and cold water?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a working refrigerator and freezer?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are disaster plans posted?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are fire extinguisher and smoke alarms provided? Date of Extinguisher check: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all windows openable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all doors readily opened from both sides?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the youth's residence protected from insect and rodent infestation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does door(s) to youth's residence have workable locks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any pets in the residence? If so, what kind? _____

Would you live in the youth's residence? Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you have any concerns about the youth's residence?

## Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

TYS Coordinator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Life Plan Agreement – 6 month Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Needs Assessment completed: \_\_\_\_\_

If I have not participated in my Life Plan before, I agree to participate now!

Based on current assessments, the following goals and activities meet my current needs.

Goal	Activity	Responsible Team Members	Planned Completion Date	Progress
<b>Education</b>				
Example: Improve English grade from D to C or better	Work with Tutor 3 times a week for 1 hour	Youth and Tutor names		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
	Work on English every school night for at least 30 minutes	Youth and Foster Parent names		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
Example: Continue working with my Life Coach on my plan to go to Vo-Tech	Visit Admissions Office and get requirement information	Youth and Mentor names		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
<b>Employment</b>				
Example: To buy a car by age 19, I need a job, budget, and savings account	Step 1 - Attend Basic skills class on Money Management	Youth, Foster Parent, and TYS Coordinator names		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
	My current job is to bring my school grades to all C's or better. Employment can be pursued after next grading period if satisfactory	Youth name		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
<b>Health</b>				
Example: Regular PCP followup visit		Youth, Foster Parent, PCP name		Met Goal on Date _____ Satisfactory Progress

## Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition

scheduled <date>				Needs More Time/Assistance Goal Needs Modification
				Met Goal on Date_____
				Satisfactory Progress
				Needs More Time/Assistance
				Goal Needs Modification
<b>Life Connections</b>				
Example: Email Life Coach weekly on progress and plans		Youth and Mentor names		Met Goal on Date_____
				Satisfactory Progress
				Needs More Time/Assistance
				Goal Needs Modification
<b>Housing</b>				
Example: Prepare dinner once a week for 6 weeks	Step 1 - Attend Basic skills class on Cooking and Meal Preparation Step 2 - Prepare dinner for my foster mom/dad once a week	Youth, TYS Coordinator, Foster Parent names		Met Goal on Date_____
				Satisfactory Progress
				Needs More Time/Assistance
				Goal Needs Modification

I understand I have the right to remain in foster care for one of the reasons listed below. While it may change, my current goal is

Education ☐ Employment ☐ Treatment ☐ or Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Youth's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Transitional Team Members and Role (mentor, foster parent, AAL, FSW, etc)

Signature	Role	Date

## Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition


# Transitional Service Categories Definitions

**Career/Job Guidance** – Career preparation services focus on developing a youth’s ability to find, apply for, and retain appropriate employment. Career preparation includes the following types of instruction and support services:

- **Vocational and Career Assessment** – includes career exploration, planning, guidance in setting and assessing vocational and career interests and skills, and help in matching interests and abilities with vocational goals;
- **Job Seeking and Job Placement Support** – includes identifying potential employers, writing resumes, completing job applications, developing interview skills, job shadowing, receiving job referrals, using career resource libraries, understanding employee benefits coverage, and securing work permits; and,
- **Retention Support** – includes job coaching, learning how to work with employers and other employees, understanding workplace values such as timeliness and appearance, and understanding authority and customer relationships.

**Education Financial Assistance** – includes payments for education or training:

- Allowances to purchase textbooks, uniforms, computers, and other educational supplies;
- Tuition assistance;
- Scholarships;
- Payment for educational preparation and support services (i.e., tutoring), and payment for GED and other educational tests that are paid for or provided by the state agency; or,
- Vouchers for Tuition or Vocational Education or tuition waiver programs paid for or provided by state agency.

**Educational Supports** – Academic supports are services designed to help a youth complete high school or obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED):

- Academic counseling;
- Assistance in applying for or studying for a GED exam;
- Tutoring;
- Assistance with homework;
- Study skills training;
- Literacy training; or
- Assistance accessing educational resources.



**Educational Supports - Post-Secondary** – Post-secondary educational supports are services designed to help a youth enter or complete college:

- Classes for test preparation, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT);
- Counseling about college;
- Information about financial aid and scholarships;
- Assistance in completing college or loan applications; or
- Tutoring while in college.

**Employment/Vocational/Training** – Employment programs and vocational training are designed to build a youth's skills for a specific trade, vocation, or career through classes or on-site training:

- Participation in an apprenticeship, internship, or summer employment program (does not include summer or after-school jobs secured by the youth alone); or,
- Participation in vocational or trade programs in school or through nonprofit, commercial, or private sectors and the receipt of training in occupational classes for such skills as cosmetology, auto mechanics, building trades, nursing, computer science, and other current or emerging employment sectors.

**Health Care Life Skills** – Health Care skills involves providing information to the youth on health care education and risk prevention:

- Hygiene;
- Nutrition;
- Fitness and exercise;
- First Aid;
- Medical and Dental Care benefits;
- Health care resources and insurance;
- Prenatal care;
- Maintaining personal medical records;
- Sex education, abstinence education, and HIV prevention; or,
- Substance abuse Prevention and Intervention (does not include youth's actual receipt of direct medical care or substance abuse treatment)

**Home Management** – Home management involves providing instructions to the youth regarding activities in the home:

- Food Preparation, Meal Planning, Grocery Shopping;
- Laundry;
- Housekeeping;
- Living cooperatively; or,
- Basic maintenance and repairs.

**Housing Life Skills** – Housing education includes assistance or training in:

- Locating Housing;
- Filling out a rental application and acquiring a lease;
- Handling security deposits and utilities;
- Understanding practices for keeping a healthy and safe home;
- Understanding tenants rights and responsibilities; or
- Handling landlord complaints.

**Interpersonal/Social Skills** – Services include education and information about:

- Safe and Stable Families
- Healthy Marriages
- Spousal Communication; or,
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention

**Mentoring** – Youth is matched with a screened and trained adult for a one-on-one relationship that involves the two meeting on a regular basis. Mentoring can be short term but it may also support the development of a long-term relationship. While youth often are connected to adult role models through school, work, or family, this service category only includes a mentor relationship that has been facilitated or funded by DCFS.

**Money Management Life Skills** – Includes training and practice in budget and financial management assistance:

- Living within a budget;
- Opening and using a checking and savings account;
- Balancing a checkbook;
- Developing consumer awareness and smart shopping skills;
- Accessing information about credit, loans and taxes; or
- Filling out tax forms.

**Parenting Skills** – includes education and information about:

- Parenting;
- Responsible fatherhood;
- Childcare Skills; or,
- Teen parenting.

**Providing Information/Act 391** – Certain information, records and documentation is required to be furnished to the youth before exiting care:

- Social Security Card;
- Certified Birth Certificate (or verification of birth record);

- Family photos;
- Health records;
- Educational Records;
- Trust Fund accounting; and,
- Life Book

**Special Stipend or Incentives** – Includes issuing of stipends or incentives.

**Transitional Financial Assistance Other** – Other financial assistance includes any other payments made or provided by the state agency to help the youth live independently.

**Transitional Housing** – Supervised independent living means the youth is living independently under a supervised arrangement that is sponsored, facilitated, or referred to by the child welfare agency. A youth in supervised independent living is not supervised 24 hours a day by an adult and often is provided with increased responsibilities, such as paying bills, assuming leases, and working with a landlord, while under the supervision of an adult.

**Transitional Room and Board Financial Assistance** – Room and board financial assistance includes payments that the state agency makes or provides for room and board, including rent deposits, utilities, and other household start-up expenses.

**Transportation** – This includes arranging transportation to and from an activity or training/employment including issuing of bus passes and gas voucher. This also includes:

- Car Repairs;
- Car Insurance;
- DCFS Foster Care Driving Insurance Reimbursement; or,
- Other associated costs

### Transitional Youth Service Supports

These services are not necessarily indicative of a particular funding source or program. Services are listed here as a reference only as possibilities for a youth's Transitional Plan. These services are not appropriate for all youth in care, but as youth plans progress in areas of housing, education, employment, health, life connections and other areas, this may serve as a prompt or reminder of possible resources. All youth in care by age 16 are required to have Transitional Services reported on the Client Contact Screen delivered by their Primary or Secondary Family Service Worker. Part of effective Case Planning is working with family members on future goals.

#### Education / Training

Service/Support	Eligibility	Verification Required
Testing fees (SAT, ACT, Compass, GED, etc.)	In Care, Adopted after 16	Documentation of test center and fee.
ACT, SAT, Compass or GED Prep Book or Course	In Care, Adopted after 16	Limit of \$50. Practice tests are available on line for free, school districts often offer prep classes on weekends
AP High School Test Fees	In Care, Adopted after 16	Student has earned C's or better in regular Advanced Placement classes during the semester
Application(s) to post-secondary school fee	In Care, Adopted after 16	Documentation of school, program, and cost. Up to 3 colleges/universities may be selected by youth for application if educational requirements for institution are met. <b>Note:</b> Application at out of state school is permitted. Youth must demonstrate maturity and have the capacity to succeed. Youth's plan will need to address any additional funding requirements above an annual educational \$5000 limit. Scholarships, savings from employment, dedicated trust fund balance, family or community assistance are examples of meeting the additional need. Plan for out of state attendance requires Director's (or designee) approval. Plan includes travel money for youth to return to AR at regular intervals and arrangements for routine contacts. Plan also includes support arranged for youth thru the educational facility or state agency. Not ICPC
ETV (Educational and Training Voucher) program  Up to \$5000 per year. PELL grant applied first PELL application (FAFSA) required	Youth must meet one of the following conditions and be applying for education or training in a school that accepts PELL. PELL awards are made before ETV and application to PELL (FAFSA) is required before requests for ETV are processed. 1. U.S.citizen or qualified non-citizen 2. Young adults must meet one of the following 3 conditions: ○ Foster alumni who were in care at age 18 and left care after that time ○ Current extended care	ETV must be applied for by the youth at the ETV website <a href="https://www.statevoucher.org/">https://www.statevoucher.org/</a> Education and Training programs eligible for funding must be certified as PELL eligible institutions//facilities  FAFSA help <a href="http://www.fafsa.com/understanding-fafsa/free-fafsa-assistance">http://www.fafsa.com/understanding-fafsa/free-fafsa-assistance</a>

	<p>youth who have completed secondary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adopted (legalized date) after age 16 from foster care in Arkansas</li> </ul> <p>3. Personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) are worth less than \$10,000,</p> <p>4. Age 18 but younger than 21 to apply for the first time. Youth younger than 18 may be considered for post-secondary education or training if secondary educational requirements have been completed.</p> <p>5. Accepted into or be enrolled in a degree, certificate or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, vocational school.</p> <p>To remain eligible for ETV funding, he or she must demonstrate progress toward a degree or certificate. Reapplications for ETV funds are required/accepted, if youth has a current grant, up to the age of 23.</p>	
TRIO programs – 6 Different Federal programs designed to assist target populations. Foster youth and former foster youth are a target service populations.	Homeless youth, youth in foster care, and youth who left foster care after reaching age 13.	<p>The “TRIO” programs, administered by the Department of Education, include six federal outreach and student services programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. The Department of Education must, as appropriate, require each college or university offering the TRIO program to identify and make available services under the program, including mentoring, tutoring, and other services a given TRIO program supports, The website <a href="http://www.aspsf.org/students_trioprograms.html">http://www.aspsf.org/students_trioprograms.html</a> may have most of the educational programs participating with this Federal program, but contact should be made with any university / college when our youth are enrolled. Student Support Services , Educational Talent Search and Educational Opportunity Center are 3 of the 6 programs likely to be of use to your youth and increase the likelihood of college retention.</p>

Tutoring	In Care – Out of Care thru TRIO	Explore tutoring services available through the schools the youth attends, TRIO programs (see above) in post-secondary educational programs, faith-based communities or local community centers (i.e. YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Workforce Development, etc.) prior to making this referral. Provide name of vendor, length of time services are requested, report card and any associated tests. Document outcome in youth's Life Plan and Case Plan. Students with IEP should receive tutoring if part of their educational plan.
Summer School – secondary or post-secondary	In Care	Provide cost estimate. Investigate with youth's guidance counselor (secondary) if youth is eligible for a fee waiver prior to making request.
Graduation Package /High School	In Care	County/Area referral - senior pictures, graduation announcements/invitations, "School Spirit" packages, class ring, etc. Provide proof of graduation (letter from school's guidance office) and costs.
Year Books	In Care	County/Area - Provide documentation of cost.
Membership/activity fees for extracurricular or leadership activities	In Care -high school or college	Documentation of cost and verification that activity is related to educational program and youth's Life Plan. Limit \$100 without prior Director (or designee) approval
School supplies, class equipment; specified graphing calculator	In Care	Document the requirement and relation to Life Plan. Includes class specified Calculators required, special enrollment fees, etc
Computer Laptop	In Care – high school or college	Academic requirement. Good student, responsible behavior, related to Transitional Plan goal

#### Housing

Name	Eligibility	Verification Required
Housing Application fees	In Care – ages 18-21	Documentation of payment
Housing Start-Up Costs (Youth start up is limited to \$1000 with in care and After care combined.) In care Housing start up is not a requirement for each youth and depends on their plan and living arrangement.	In Care – ages 18-21 Out of Care if turned 18 In Care not yet 21. Adopted 16 or after – if prior to 18 involvement with Basic Skills Classes and Casey Assessment In order to access Housing start up must be active in working toward independence. – Involvement thru employment, pre-employment programs, education, training, etc must be an active component of housing start up participation.	Provide documentation of youth's budget and items requested. In Care – \$300 dorm, \$500 Apartment.
After Care Housing / Start up	Out of Care if turned 18 in Care Requested anytime before age 21 In order to access Housing	After Care funds are available assist you in purchasing the household items and services needed to establish a home or to further independence. Youth request for After Care funds must be in process before the youth's 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday. Requests for funding must be consistent with establishing a home or in

	start up must be active in working toward independence. – Involvement thru employment, pre-employment programs, education, training, etc must be an active component of housing start up participation	<p>furthering a youth's independence as they work .</p> <p>Provide documentation of application/budget/plan completed within 90 days prior to leaving care if After Care start up is needed at the time of exit and is not being delayed.</p> <p>After Care funding guideline – \$500 furnished apt, \$800 unfurnished apartment</p> <p>Aftercare – up to \$2000 available for transitional plan support - combination of housing costs/board/start-up included in Transition Plan. \$500 monthly limit on housing, \$500 one time limit on transportation/automotive category costs.</p> <p>Eligible expenses: rent deposits, rent payment, utility deposits and hook-up fees, household appliances, personal care items, computer, transportation expenses, driver's education and licenses, automotive repair, auto insurance, GED or other educational fees or costs not covered by ETV/Chafee and work apparel.</p> <p>Non-eligible expenses: traffic tickets, bail, court –assessed payment or restitution, firearms, weapons, entertainment, tobacco, drugs or alcohol.</p> <p>Transitional Coordinators will assist the youth in applications for this funding.</p>
Housing Deposit	In Care	Documentation of deposit fee and housing information. Youth's residents checklist for housing completed. Youth in care / SGR but may be requested as Transitional if part of youth's plan
Monthly Board Payment (Sponsor)	In Care	Documentation of enrollment and participation in school/training/treatment/employment program or in programs and activities to prepare for educational or employment. Life Plan and Transitional Planning and Transitional Team work must reflect progress in Transitional Plan and youth's active involvement with their plan. Payments will be made to young adult's sponsor. Young adult's budget and progress reports for Youth's plan documented with Transitional Team.

#### Job Training or Employment

Name	Eligibility	Verification Required with Referral
Materials/Uniforms for vocational studies	In Care	Provide verification of needed services and associated cost. Provide verification of program enrollment.
Certification Fees/ Exams	In Care, Adopted after 16	Document cost. Limit under \$100 unless PELL eligible program
Job readiness program/ training	In Care	Documentation of cost and references for program Public or Not for Profit only.. Provide verification of job readiness training completion. <b>One time only.</b>
Job start-up costs	In Care	Provide verification of needed services and associated cost to move toward meaningful employment. Transitional Plan
Tools/Equipment	In Care	For the cost of tools/equipment not covered by financial aid, ETV, or other scholarship. Provide documentation of program, cost, and admission. Provide Life Transitional Plan. Estimates from 3 vendors required if quotes require no additional cost.

#### Transportation

Name	Eligibility	Verification Required with Referral
Driver's Education Class Fees	In Care	Seek services through high school programs prior to submitting the referral. Provide verification of needed service and associated cost. <b>One time only.</b>
Driver's Testing Fees	In Care	Provide documentation of test center and fee.
Car insurance	In Care	See Policy
Transportation Grant	In Care	Youth are not eligible if residing on campus for school related grants – would then be work related transportation grant. If youth owns a vehicle, must provide proof of ownership/insurance. If youth car-pools, must provide proof of insurance on the vehicle youth will be transported in. If youth is utilizing car transportation services, request the amount of that service for the month not to exceed \$60.00/mo. If bus pass, then request the amount of the monthly bus pass.
After Care	Turned 18 in Care – Less than 21 years old	Transportation category costs of up to \$500 may be used if After Care funding - \$2000 is available. Items could be tires, repairs, insurance, etc necessary for the youth to work or attend school. Traffic fines/tickets are not eligible.
Bike	In Care	Life Plan / education or employment
Car Repairs	In Care	Provide proof of ownership (title) and/or registration (must be in young adult's name), and proof of car insurance. Budget required. Estimates from 3 vendors required if quotes require no additional cost. \$500 limit – one time only with justification and with past progress demonstrated in Transitional Plan. Justification from youth – how it is necessary for either work or educational participation.

#### Special Requests

Name	Eligibility	Verification Required with Referral
Other special needs – unique to youth's plan and transitional needs	In Care	Needed to help prepare youth for self-sufficiency and meet a well-being related goal. Transitional Plan submitted and justification
Life Skills Training Classes refreshments or supplies Stipend/Incentive (may be available for targeted classes/group) Prior approval required	In Care, Adopted after 16, ICPC age appropriate	Provide proof of completion of class. Documented attendance
Youth Development or Leadership Program/ Conference	In Care - participating in youth leadership activities	Internships, conference costs, etc to develop youth's confidence, skills, or other interests consistent with Life Plan. Application/letter from youth with Team members co-sign. Seek sponsors. Promotes normalization for youth in school activities. Limit \$100 plus travel without prior approval from Director (or designee)
Child care assistance	In Care	<b>Please assist the young adult with applying for services via DCECD prior to submitting a fiscal referral.</b> To provide childcare assistance in order to help the parent maintain self-sufficiency and stability, progress in the applicable educational program and to prevent the child from entering state custody. Please include whether services from DHS are pending or were



		denied.
Mentor/ Life Coach (Therapeutic or Intensive)	In Care	Transitional Plan / Life Plan with Team recommendation. Document projected cost with Client Specific Purchase Order
IFS	In Care	Referral to Contract Provider, approval for Encumbrance in CFM in contract, Supervisors approval
Drug Treatment	In Care	Referral to Contract Provider, approval for Encumbrance in CFM in contract, Supervisors approval
Counseling	In Care	Referral to Contract Provider, approval for Encumbrance in CFM in contract, Supervisors approval
Life Skills Training Classes refreshments or supplies Stipend/Incentive (may be available for targeted classes/group) Prior approval required. Examples could include classes for Teen mom, teen parents, pregnancy prevention, drug abuse prevention, etc	In Care, After Care to 21 if turned 18 in Care; Adopted after 16	Provide proof of completion of class. Documented attendance

# The DCFS Arkansas ETV Program

The Arkansas Education and Training Voucher Program is a federally-funded program administered by Division of Children and Family Services designed to help youth who were or are currently in foster care. Students may receive up to \$5000 a year for **qualified school related expenses**.

Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students. Applicants must complete the ETV application that includes documentation each semester that is sent directly from the school to ETV confirming enrollment, the cost of attendance (COA) and unmet need.

## Eligibility Requirements:

1. Current or former student who:

★ Foster care status on his or her 18th birthday and aged out at that time.

OR

★ Adopted from foster care with the adoption finalized AFTER his or her 16th birthday.

OR

★ Foster care current status and has completed a secondary education.

OR

★ Foster care case will close between the ages of 18 and 21 and other educational conditions are met.

2. U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen.
3. Personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) are worth less than \$10,000.
4. Age 18 but younger than 21 to apply for the first time. Youth younger than 18 may be considered for post-secondary education or training if secondary educational requirements have been completed.
5. Accepted into or be enrolled in a degree, certificate or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, vocational school.



To remain eligible for ETV funding, he or she must demonstrate progress toward a degree or certificate. Reapplications for ETV funds are required/accepted, if youth has a current grant, up to the age of 23.

Contact Arkansas ETV Coordinator at  
**[arkansas@statevoucher.org](mailto:arkansas@statevoucher.org)**

---

***Help Assure Youth have working Email Accounts!***

---

*Youth applying for ETV must have an active email address to begin the application process. An application code will be sent to the email account so he or she can complete and track the online application. If youth do not have a working email address, please assure access to the internet and assistance to get a free account is available to the youth. Gmail, Yahoo, HotMail and other offer free email accounts.*

**Care      Commit      Connect**  
***Together for Arkansas Children and Families***



## Division of Aging and Adult Services

OFFICE OF PUBLIC GUARDIAN  
FOR ADULTS

# HISTORY

- Our General Assembly found that many adults lacked the capacity to provide informed consent to necessary health care, have not executed an advance health care directive or a durable power of attorney, and have no friend or family member qualified and willing to consent on their behalf.
- Act 862 of 2007 created the Office of Public Guardian for Adults to meet this public need, funding was secured in 2009, and the first appointee, Ivy Lincoln, started work in May of 2010.
- The Office of the Public Guardian for Adults is within the Department of Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Public Guardian for Adults may serve as guardian of the person, guardian of the person's estate, or both—depending on the needs of the incapacitated individual.
- Before the Public Guardian can actually make decisions for an incapacitated person, he must be appointed by a Circuit Court Probate Division Judge to serve that particular ward.
- After appointment, the Public Guardian visits his ward, makes decisions for the welfare of the ward as needed, and reports on the ward's status to the court.

# CRITERIA FOR GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

The potential ward must be:

- ☐ 18 years of age or older
- ☐ mentally incapacitated—lacking the capacity to make and communicate decisions necessary for health, safety, and welfare; or to manage property
- ☐ served by any public agency of the State of Arkansas, and
- ☐ there must be no friend or family member qualified and willing to consent to medical procedures or handle income and possessions for the potential ward.

**To make a referral please call, fax or email**

**Ivy Lincoln**

**Phone: 501-682-6031**

**Fax: 501-371-8050**

**[ivy.lincoln@arkansas.gov](mailto:ivy.lincoln@arkansas.gov)**



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
PROBATE DIVISION**

**AFFIDAVIT**

I am familiar with \_\_\_\_\_, having known and worked with [him/her] since \_\_\_\_\_. [He/She] resides at \_\_\_\_\_ where [he/she] was enrolled by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 19... [Give complete history of responsible parties, names and addresses of relatives and contact persons, and any prior guardians] [His/her] expenses and cost of care are provided through [Medicaid reimbursement/other public/private sources, and to what extent]. To my knowledge, no private person is willing to be guardian.

\_\_\_\_\_ was born on \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ has [no property or income/a small amount of personal property.../describe property if owned].

\_\_\_\_\_ needs a permanent guardian to make decisions throughout her life.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**VERIFICATION**

STATE OF ARKANSAS

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature]

Notary Public

(Seal)

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

**PROBATE DIVISION**

**PHYSICIAN'S AFFIDAVIT**

\_\_\_\_\_ has been examined by, \_\_\_\_\_, a physician  
licensed to practice medicine in the state of Arkansas.

\_\_\_\_\_ has the following diagnosis(es):

Primary Diagnosis:

This diagnosis was determined by what testing, patient history, examination or other  
acceptable means of diagnostic testing:

Secondary Diagnosis:

This diagnosis determined by what testing, patient history or other acceptable means of  
diagnostic testing:

If the secondary diagnosis is a mental health diagnosis, state how it is determined that the  
primary diagnosis supersedes the mental health diagnosis:

State what level of care the client requires?

Is institutional care recommended? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_no

If yes, for what care needs?

What is the least restrictive environment recommended by physician?

Is it recommended that the client [does/does not] appear in court for the hearing? Why or  
why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## VERIFICATION

STATE OF ARKANSAS

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_

[Official Title]

(Seal)

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

# Best Practices for Increasing Meaningful

# Y<sup>outh</sup> P<sup>articipation</sup>

## In Collaborative Team Planning



**A**CHIEVE



**M**Y



**P**LAN



## Acknowledgments

This publication was produced by the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health at Portland State University and was developed with funding from:



the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, United States Department of Education, and

the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (NIDRR grant H133B040038).



The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agencies.

Portland State University supports equal opportunity in admissions, education, employment, and the use of facilities by prohibiting discrimination in those areas based on race, color, creed or religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. This policy implements state and federal law (including Title IX).

*This document was printed on 25% post-consumer, 50% total recycled-content paper.*

This publication was authored by the following RTC staff:

Janet Walker  
Rujuta Gaonkar  
Laurie Powers

Barbara Friesen  
Beckie Child  
Ariel Holman

and the AMP advisory board:

Bradley Belka  
Stephanie Boyer  
Loretta Cone  
Kayla Griffin  
Mollie Janssen  
Jan Lacy  
Lynda Lowe

Angel Moore  
Brandy Sweeney  
Nathan Tanner  
Sonja Tanner  
Jackie Trussel  
Kenny Veres

Publication layout and design by:

Nicole Aue  
(RTC)



means to help them move towards important life goals.

These best practices are based on a combination of research findings and input from AMP advisors and other youth and adults who are part of planning teams around the nation. Some of these practices require time and resources, and many require that teams organize their work in ways that are different than usual. But this is to be expected—getting a higher level of youth participation than you are used to will require you to invest in making some changes.

## Organizational Support for Participation

**H**uman service and educational agencies and systems often convene teams to work collaboratively on plans for serving children or youth. This is particularly true for children and youth who are involved with multiple systems or who are felt to be in need of intensive intervention. These kinds of planning teams include IEP (Individualized Education Plan) teams, wraparound teams, foster care Independent Living Program teams, transition planning teams, youth/family decision teams, and other teams that create service or treatment plans. Unfortunately, it is often true that these plans are created *for* youth, with little input or buy-in from the young people themselves.

In previous research on team planning, we found that adults who participated on teams were eager to involve youth in planning in a more meaningful way, but were unsure how to feasibly accomplish this goal. In response, we began work on AMP. AMP—Achieve My Plan—is a five-year project that is developing and testing ways to increase the meaningful participation of youth in collaborative team planning meetings. Here, we share some of what we have learned about how to create plans with youth, so that youth will see the plans as a

---

### **Promote an organizational culture that sees youth participation as valuable and feasible.**

Agency staff are more likely to support youth participation if they see that it is a priority within the agency, and if the agency provides resources—like time and training—so that staff can gain the skills they need to carry out activities that encourage youth participation. Staff, families, and youth themselves will be more open to youth participation if they are given information that demonstrates increasing youth participation is both desirable and possible.

### **Ensure youth are present when decisions that impact the plan are made: “Nothing about me without me.”**

Youth won’t be participating meaningfully in the planning process unless they are present when decisions are made, and their input is invited. The agency and the team should be clear about their commitment to youth participation in decision-making and the process for making decisions. Make a record of the decisions. Don’t change these decisions later or make “real” decisions outside the team meeting. Invite youth to participate in the entire meeting, and don’t make decisions or share important information when youth are absent.

## Before the Meeting: Help the Youth Prepare

**In consultation with the youth, formulate an agenda before the meeting.** A young person will be more comfortable and willing to participate if he can trust that the team will not become a public discussion of uncomfortable topics. The youth should have a chance to review agenda items before the meeting. If there are topics that he feels should not be discussed in front of the whole team, work with him to figure out how to manage sensitive topics outside of the team setting.

**Provide adequate preparation so that youth have a real opportunity to think about what and how they want to contribute to the topics on the agenda.** Youth are likely to draw a blank or feel put on the spot when asked to spontaneously contribute to a discussion in a room full of adults. Youth should have an opportunity to prep for the meeting with a “coach” who reviews the meeting structure and the items on the agenda. This can be done individually, or with youth in groups. During this prep session, the youth is supported to decide what points she wants to make about each topic on the agenda and how she will communicate these points. She should also be coached to think about times during the meeting when she may need some kind of support, and who would be the best person to offer that support.

**Make sure that the youth has the opportunity to formulate goals that will be part of the plan.** It's essential for young people to learn about setting and reaching their own goals—after all, this is what becoming more mature is all about. What's more, a young person is more likely to feel ownership and buy-in for the plan when it includes

activities and goals that she finds personally meaningful. Part of prepping for initial planning meetings should include an opportunity for the youth to be coached through a process of thinking about her goals for the future, and how activities consistent with those goals can become part of the team plan.

**Help the youth plan to contribute to the meeting in whatever manner feels comfortable to him.**

With preparation, many youth will feel comfortable talking to the team during the meeting. Some youth prefer to use notes; some prefer to read prepared comments. Some youth may prefer to have someone else speak for them. Some youth feel comfortable talking during parts of the meeting (for instance, welcoming everyone and doing introductions); however, the youth may want more support to talk when it comes to commenting on topics others bring up during the meeting. Even youth who are usually shy

may feel comfortable speaking in the meeting if they know that there is a back-up plan in place in case this becomes too difficult. (For example, if the youth gets too anxious to speak, the support person can speak from the youth's notes.)

**Help the youth think about things he might do during the meeting to help stay calm and/or focused.** Youth

will be able to participate more effectively in the meeting if they feel comfortable using strategies to manage their attention, emotions and/or behavior. A youth may prefer to stand or walk around during part of the meeting. Another may be able to pay more attention if he is doodling or chewing gum. Another youth may need to take a cigarette break mid-way through the meeting. Help the youth identify strategies that will work for him and support the youth for using those strategies during the meeting.



**Work with the youth to figure out who can support her during the meeting and prepare that “support person” for his role.** Encourage the participation of one or more “support people” recognized by the youth. A support person is someone that, in the youth’s eyes...

...can be trusted,

...believes in the youth’s capacities to make decisions and set goals,

...understands what meetings are and can interact well with others in a meeting, and

...can help the youth communicate productively during the meeting.

A support person will likely need orientation prior to the meeting so that he can understand his role. He should also have the opportunity to be “prepped” together with the youth prior to the meeting so he knows how and when the youth might need support and how to offer support in the team context.

## **During the Meeting: Create a Safe Environment**

**Ensure that the team environment feels safe for the youth.** Young people report that, during team meetings, they are often ignored, lectured at, and/or harshly criticized. To help the meeting feel safe, the team should agree to a set of ground rules, and the facilitator should be able to control the meeting in a way that ensures that people follow the rules. Ground rules should include the following:

*1. All team members treat each other respectfully, the youth no less than others.* This means that people in the meeting ...

...talk directly to the youth, not about the youth as if she is not there.

...do not assume or assert that they know why the youth said or did something. No one knows for sure what’s in another person’s mind.

...speak to the group one at a time, and avoid side conversations or distractions like answering phones during the meeting.

...treat everyone’s ideas and contributions respectfully.



*2. Remain strengths-based and solution-focused.* Youth feel that adults often spend too much time stuck thinking about the past, particularly about problems the youth might have had or bad “incidents.” Avoid telling long stories about the youth. Do not take this as an opportunity

to lecture the youth about how she should act. Do not get into arguments with the youth about what she “really” did or why she “really” did it. This is unproductive and alienating. Instead, focus on strengths, problem solving, and building opportunities that help the youth act in ways that the whole team can support. Communicate that you believe the youth can set new directions for herself and that you want to help.

*3. During the meeting, stick to the agenda that the youth has helped create.* There should be no last-minute additions to the agenda; off-topic discussion that arises during the meeting should be tabled for later discussion. Team members can make a list of these items and be sure that, by the end of the meeting, they have worked out a strategy for addressing them.

*4. Make sure that everyone can understand what is going on.* Invite everyone on the team to ask questions if they don’t understand something or if unfamiliar terminology or acronyms come



up during discussion. Be supportive when people ask for this kind of clarification.

**5. Learn how to talk in ways that don't alienate or hurt the youth.** Professionals often say that they don't want to include youth in important decisions because hearing certain truths will hurt the youth's feelings. Professionals may feel uncomfortable or even cruel using labels or speaking about the results of tests or assessments in front of a youth. But rather than using this as an excuse to exclude the youth, use it as an opportunity to reflect on why "helping" feels so cruel that it has to be done when youth are not around. It is possible to speak the truth and to get business done without being cruel. Explain that discussion of diagnoses and problems are often required by the system in order to get services, but the most important purpose of the team is to recognize the youth's strengths and support her in moving toward a positive future.



## During the Meeting: Ensure the Youth is Part of the Team

**Structure discussion in ways that provide multiple opportunities for the youth to express his ideas or offer comments, even if he doesn't want to say a lot at any one time.** Make space for the youth to contribute to discussions, and check in with him from time to time. A youth may not want to say a lot each time, but will feel more included anyway.

**Ensure that what the youth says matters and has an impact on discussions and decisions.** While this does not mean that the youth should solely dictate the plan, it does mean that people on the team should be willing to truly listen to what

the youth has to say and incorporate the youth's interests into the plan. Of course, helping the youth formulate goals for the plan and prepare to speak to topics on the agenda are important ways to help ensure that he or she will have an impact.

Beyond this, it is also important to structure decision-making in ways that support collaboration. Some key ways to do this are:

**1. Don't decide the solution before you have a chance to think about what the goal, "problem," or need really is.** Sometimes a goal, problem, or need is defined so narrowly that there is no room to collaborate in creating a solution or strategy. A team member may say that the problem is that the youth needs anger management classes. If the team accepts this as the real problem, then there is only one (predetermined) way to solve it: with anger management classes. In this way, the person that defines the problem gets to define the solution as well. There is no chance for the youth—or anyone else—to have meaningful input. While this example is a bit of a caricature, this type of situation occurs frequently in group settings. A more collaborative (and often more effective) way to think about a problem is to work as a group to think about deeper needs. What purpose would anger management classes serve? In general, a problem or need should be defined in such a way that a variety of strategies could be used to solve it. Then you can...

**2. Consider several different strategies to solve a problem or meet a need before picking one to use.** If only one strategy is considered, it is often not a very creative strategy, and usually it is the "pet" strategy of someone with a higher level of power at the meeting. Everyone in a group



or team is empowered when the team considers options before making decisions, but this is particularly true for youth, who haven't had a whole professional career to think about some of these things.

**Ensure that the youth's strengths, assets, talents, and achievements are a focus of the meeting and a part of the plan.** Youth report that what they do well is rarely discussed in meetings. They also feel that what they accomplish from week to week or month to month is consistently overshadowed during meetings by talk about problems and deficits. Goals and activities that are written into plans usually focus on remedies for problems rather than on developing skills, talents, and assets. A strengths focus helps to counteract these tendencies by engaging youth and other team members in recognizing, reinforcing, and building on a youth's positive actions and capacities. Maintaining a strengths focus is not something that naturally happens in most team meetings, so meetings should be structured and facilitated in ways that support it.

*Specific portions of the meeting and steps in the planning process should be explicitly structured to bring in a strengths focus.* For example, every meeting can begin with a group discussion of what's going well. Initial steps in planning should include some form of strengths inventory or list, and this list should be used when the team is deciding how best to reach goals or meet needs. The strengths list or inventory should appear in formal team documentation and can be reviewed or added to at a specific point during each meeting.



**Be sure that everyone, including the youth, understands the decisions made and the next steps after the meeting.** At the end of the meeting or before shifting from one agenda item to the next, review any decisions made and follow-up responsibilities and deadlines. Write this information down and give the plan to each participant, including the youth. When a youth has offered to take on a follow-up task, be sure to ask if he needs any support to do it. Help the youth think through what accomplishing the task will require and offer support ideas.

## Measuring Participation and Empowerment

**It is important to gather some sort of data or feedback from youth to assess whether they feel involved in planning and confident about their ability to make decisions about services.**

The AMP project has created and validated two measures for exactly this purpose.

One assesses youth participation in team planning, and the other assesses youth empowerment.

Both measures are youth-friendly and brief. The two together can be completed by most youth in 5 to 8 minutes. The youth participation measure assesses whether or not the team environment is one that encourages meaningful youth participation in the planning process. The empowerment measure assesses the extent to which a youth feels confident in managing his or her condition, interacting with service providers, and helping change service systems. These measures are available from the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health. Contact [rtcpubs@pdx.edu](mailto:rtcpubs@pdx.edu). **AMP**

# ACHIEVE MY



# PLAN

research & training center  
portland  
ON FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



*This document was created by staff and advisors of the AMP (Achieve My Plan) project at the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.*



**You're a young person in transition.** It's a trip and you are the traveler! You're on your way to your next stop: independent young adulthood. **IT'S EXCITING:** when you get there, you'll have no state or foster care strings attached to you. You'll get to make your own decisions. **IT'S SCARY:** times are uncertain. Young people are having trouble finding jobs, getting their lives going. At FosterClub, we believe in you. We built this toolkit to help you design a travel plan, working with your transition support team, that will create a map of what you have and what you need for your safe journey to adulthood.



# *FosterClub's* TRANSITION [ in collaboration with FosteringConnections.org ] *toolkit*

FosterClub members  
Lupe (Arizona), Mercedes  
(Wisconsin), Tyler  
(Florida), Nicole (Oregon),  
Anthony (Georgia)

a free tool for developing a youth-driven transition plan with a team approach



the national network for young people in foster care | [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)

## SOAR

### SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery

Sponsored by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in collaboration with Social Security Administration.

**What is SOAR:** SOAR is a technical assistance and training program designed to help States and communities increase access to disability benefits for qualified individuals who experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, especially those who have a mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorder. SSI/SSDI is critical to preventing and ending homelessness, providing access to needed treatment, services, and promoting recovery, and frees up resources to assist others.

Historically only 37% of all applicants are typically approved on initial application. Only about 10-15% of homeless adults are approved on initial application. Appeals take years and many potentially eligible people give up and do not appeal. After SOAR training approval rates have jumped to 65-95% on initial application. 2009 data from 35 SOAR states reports an average of 71% of individuals assisted were approved within 89 days. **In Arkansas current data shows 93% of applications were approved within 58.6 days.**

**SOAR focuses on:**

- Trained case managers actively assist applicants and develop evidence
- Partnering with all stakeholders and providers to share information
- The initial application—"get it right the first time"
- Avoiding appeals and consultative exams whenever possible
- Documenting the disability
- Ongoing communication/collaboration with SSA and DDS (regional and local)
- Quality review of application prior to submission
- Electronic submission of applications and medical information when possible
- "Flagging" of SOAR applications at both SSA and DDS
- Representative payee when possible

**Benefits to States:**

- prevention and reduction in homelessness
- Promotes recovery
- Brings additional resources into the state and local economies
- Provides an income to individuals, 30% of which can be collected as rent by subsidized housing providers
- Medicaid pays for behavioral health services and reimburses uncompensated health care up to 90 days retroactive from original filing date

#### IN ARKANSAS:

34 Staff from 7 Community Mental Health Centers have been trained in application completion.  
Trained staff serve 44 counties in the State.

3 Staff from Arkansas State Hospital have been trained in application completion.

Collaborations with Community Mental Health Centers, Division of Behavioral Health Services, Arkansas State Hospital, Division of Children and Family Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Workforce Services, Social Security Administration, Disability Determination Services, and many local and regional stakeholders and providers.

Two Certified SOAR Instructors

Marilyn Hampton, State SOAR Leader  
Division of Behavioral Health Services, 501-686-9036

Counties Served by SOAR-Trained Staff:

Baxter  
Benton  
Boone  
Calhoun  
Carroll  
Clark  
Clay  
Cleburne  
Columbia  
Craighead  
Crittenden  
Cross  
Dallas  
Fulton  
Garland  
Greene  
Hot Spring  
Independence  
Izard  
Jackson  
Lawrence  
Lee  
Madison  
Marion  
Mississippi  
Monroe  
Montgomery  
Nevada  
Newton  
Ouachita  
Phillips  
Pike  
Poinsett  
Pulaski (part)  
Randolph  
Searcy  
Sharp  
St. Francis  
Stone  
Union  
Van Buren  
Washington  
White  
Woodruff

# About Me

*What people involved with my foster care plan should know.*

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and here is some information about me that might be helpful to my new foster parents.

My birthdate is \_\_\_\_\_ which means I'm \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ brothers and sisters. Their names are: \_\_\_\_\_

The school I currently attend is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade. I have attended about \_\_\_\_\_ schools in my life.

## Describing myself:

The color of my eyes are: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of my hair: \_\_\_\_\_

I would describe myself as:

- |                                   |                                   |  |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> quiet    | <input type="checkbox"/> artistic        | <input type="checkbox"/> talented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> funny    | <input type="checkbox"/> loud     | <input type="checkbox"/> musical         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> shy      | <input type="checkbox"/> smart    | <input type="checkbox"/> pretty/handsome | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> stylish/trendy  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |

When I have a problem, here is how I try to handle it:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing in a journal         | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to friends        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinking by myself           | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to a caring adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> getting angry and being mean | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to my counselor   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> going on a run or exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                     |

## Favorites:

My favorite foods are: \_\_\_\_\_

My least favorite foods are: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite subject at school: \_\_\_\_\_

Least favorite subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Other favorites:

Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Game to play: \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of music: \_\_\_\_\_ Band: \_\_\_\_\_

Movie: \_\_\_\_\_ Book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Things I like to do:

	Love to do	Like to do	Want to learn how
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have these hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I need some help finding some hobbies

Stuff I like to do on the weekends and in my spare time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Living with me:

If it were up to me, you would find my room:

- ☐ Messy ☐ Clean ☐ Somewhere in between

Chores and help around the house that I am pretty good at: \_\_\_\_\_

My sleeping habits:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I usually stay up late and sleep in | <input type="checkbox"/> I get up early in the morning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a hard time sleeping         | <input type="checkbox"/> This helps me get to sleep    |

## Other Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**for your  
information**

## Attention Adults:

**A foster youth, whose life may be greatly impacted by your decisions, wishes his/her voice to be heard. By submitting opinions on this form, this youth has expressed a desire to be involved in his/her own foster care plan. Please give this input the time, attention and respect it deserves.**

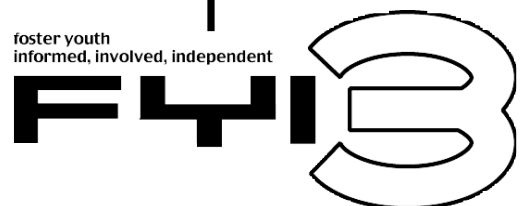
**For more information about FY13 forms or to download additional forms, visit**

**www.fyi3.com**

**a non-profit website for foster youth who want to be informed, involved and independent.**

Permission granted to copy for unlimited use as long as information on the form, including credits, logos, and this message, remains unchanged.  
©2002 FosterClub, Inc.

**foster youth  
informed, involved, independent**



# My Foster Care Plan

*Foster youth's input into their foster care plan.*

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to have a say about what happens to me while I am in foster care. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Please take my opinions into account when you are creating a care plan for me. If you are not able to meet any of my wishes listed below, please inform me and explain why as soon as possible.

## The best plan for me:

I believe the following plan(s) would be in my best interest:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption by my current foster family | <input type="checkbox"/> Reunification with my mom or dad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption by another family           | <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent foster care            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emancipation                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure                           |

This is why

---

---

---

---

When I would like this plan to happen: ☐ Now ☐ Sooner the better ☐ Unsure

## Siblings:

I have \_\_\_\_\_ brothers and \_\_\_\_\_ sisters.

- ☐ It is very important to me that I be put in the same home that they are.  
☐ It is not very important to me that I am in the same home as them.

## Visitations with family (check all that apply):

I would like to have visits with (names):	Overnights	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Problems at my bio family's home:

You should know the following : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Problems at my foster home:

You should know the following : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Problems with the agency or my caseworker:

You should know the following : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Signature

I promise that the information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a problem figuring out how to deliver this form to the right person, talk to your foster parent, guardian, caseworker, teacher or a counselor and ask them to help you. Remember to keep a copy of this form for your own records.

**for your  
information**

## Attention Adults:

**A foster youth, whose life may be greatly impacted by your decisions, wishes his/her voice to be heard. By submitting opinions on this form, this youth has expressed a desire to be involved in his/her own foster care plan. Please give this input the time and attention it deserves.**

**For more information about FYI3 forms or to download additional forms, visit [www.fyi3.com](http://www.fyi3.com) a non-profit website for foster youth who want to be informed, involved and independent.**

Permission granted to copy for unlined use as long as information on the form, including credits, logos, and the message, remains unchanged.  
©2002 FosterClub, Inc.

**foster youth  
informed, involved, independent**



# Problem/Complaint

*Request by a foster youth for assistance*

**for your  
information**

To: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This is an official complaint or problem that I am requesting your assistance with.

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

My foster parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

My phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My caseworker: \_\_\_\_\_

## This is my problem/complaint:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## This is how I would rate my problem:

- ☐ Urgent (I fear for myself or someone else's life)
- ☐ Very Important (This requires attention within the next 72 hours)
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Get to it when you have some available time
- ☐ Just a suggestion, something I want recorded in my casefile

## How to reach me: I would prefer that you contact me in the following way (check all that apply):

- ☐ Call me at home
- ☐ Come to school \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Come to my home
- ☐ Write me back
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Confidentiality It is important to me that this problem not be discussed with:

---

---

## Check any of the following that apply:

- ☐ Please refer me to someone to help me deal with this problem
- ☐ I am feeling so depressed that I have had thoughts of suicide
- ☐ This problem is so bad that I have thought of running away or dropping out of school
- ☐ I feel that I am in danger or that this problem is affecting my health

## Delivery of this form: Check the list below to indicate who you have delivered this form to and who you wish a copy of it to be delivered to.

- ☐ Foster parent or guardian
- ☐ Caseworker
- ☐ Caseworker's supervisor
- ☐ Attorney
- ☐ Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) or CASA
- ☐ Counselor or therapist
- ☐ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Signature

I promise that the information I have provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a problem figuring out how to deliver this form to the right person, talk to your foster parent, guardian, caseworker, teacher or a counselor and ask them to help you. Remember to keep a copy of this form for your own records.

**Attention Adults:**  
A foster youth, whose life may be greatly impacted by your decisions, wishes his/her voice to be heard. By submitting information on this form, this youth has asked for your help in resolving a problem. Please give this input the time, attention and respect it deserves.

**For more information about FYI3 forms or to download additional forms, visit [www.fyi3.com](http://www.fyi3.com)** a non-profit website for foster youth who want to be informed, involved and independent.

Permission granted to copy for unlined use as long as information on the form, including credits, logos, and the message, remains unchanged.  
©2002 FosterClub, Inc.

foster youth  
informed, involved, independent







# Permanency Pact

*Life-long, kin-like  
connections between  
a youth and  
a supportive adult*

A free tool to support permanency for youth in foster care



The national network for young people in foster care

[www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)

*What's a Permanency Pact? A pledge by a supportive adult to provide specific supports to a young person in foster care with a goal of establishing a lifelong, kin-like relationship.*

## Permanency Pact

Youth transitioning from foster care are often unsure about who they can count on for ongoing support. Many of their significant relationships with adults have been based on professional connections which will terminate once the transition from care is completed. It is critical to the youth's success to identify those adults who will continue to provide various supports through and beyond the transition from care. Clarifying exactly what the various supports will include can help to avoid gaps in the youth's safety net and misunderstandings between the youth and the supportive adult.

### A Permanency Pact provides:

- structure and a safety net for the youth
- a defined and verbalized commitment by both parties to a long term supportive relationship
- clarity regarding the expectations of the relationship

A Permanency Pact creates a formalized, facilitated process to connect youth in foster care with a supportive adult. The process of bringing the supportive adult together with youth and developing a pledge or "Permanency Pact" has proven successful in clarifying the relationship and identifying mutual expectations. A committed, caring adult may provide a lifeline for a youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own.

### Participants in a Permanency Pact

In addition to the two primary parties in a Permanency Pact (the youth and the supportive adult), it is recommended that a Facilitator assist in developing the Pact.

The *Facilitator* may be a Case Worker, Independent Living Provider or other adult who:

- is knowledgeable in facilitating Permanency Pacts\*
- is familiar with the youth, and
- can provide insight into the general needs of the youth transitioning from care

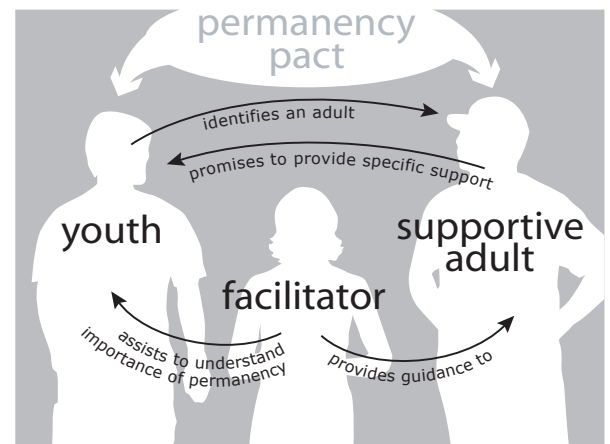
The *Supportive Adult* is an adult who:

- has been identified by the youth
- has a relationship with the youth
- is willing to commit to a life-long relationship with the youth
- is a positive role-model and
- is able to provide the youth with specific support on an on-going basis



Shawn from Michigan,  
FosterClub All-Star

"As I get older I am seeing the importance of family, community and peer support. Ever since I became engaged and active in my community my circle of support has expanded. My life has become so much more enriched now that I have accepted that I have a lot of people that care about me, I genuinely believe that family: peers, bio, foster, adoptive, in-laws are the most valuable thing a person can have in their life."



\*A Permanency Pact Toolkit will be available  
Summer, 2007 at [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)



# Developing a Permanency Pact

The first step is to engage the youth to identify the supports they want or need as they prepare for the transition out of foster care, and beyond to adulthood. The following list of 45 Suggested Supports can help with this process. Together with the youth, the Facilitator can then begin to develop a list of adults who may be able to provide some of those supports. This list may include current relationships or adults with whom the youth has had a previous connection to which they wish to reestablish.

The Facilitator then:

- obtains necessary releases of information
- makes initial contact with the indentified adult(s)
- updates them regarding the youth's current situation
- gauges their level of interest
- assists the adult in identifying possible supports they will provide, and
- schedules and facilitates the Permanency Pact meeting

Working with the Supportive Adult, the Facilitator can use the following list of 45 Suggested Supports to draft a list of supports that the adult wishes to offer the youth. The list is then presented to the youth who will acknowledge the offer and accept those supports that they feel would be most beneficial. Additional supports may be suggested by either the youth or the supportive adult.

The final list may then be hand written using the attached list or entered into the Pact template, available in Microsoft Word, Wordperfect, and PDF formats (available in the Permanency Pact toolkit, order through [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) starting Summer 2007). The youth and Supportive Adult sign the Pact and the Facilitator provides a witness signature. Copies of the Permanency Pact are provided to the youth, the Supportive Adult and maintained in the case record as part of the youth's Transition Plan. It is recommended that a certificate be prepared which documents the Pact between the adult and youth (certificate templates available in the Permanency Pact toolkit). All other members of the youth's Transition Team, including foster parents, CASA, judge, etc. should also receive copies of the Permanency Pact.

Taking a step toward trusting a relationship is often a very great accomplishment for a youth with a background where relationships are broken, promises are often not kept, and disappointment in caretakers prevails. The gift that a Supportive Adult contributes by way of a life-long commitment to the relationship is heroic. The impact of the forged relationship may be profound to all parties. To symbolize the importance of the commitment, it is recommended that a Permanency Pact be held in conjunction with some sort of ceremony or celebration. The Supportive Adult may want to give the youth a token keepsake gift (a piece of jewelry, photo frame, watch, engraved item, a special note, photo album, etc.), a celebration meal can be enjoyed.

A Certificate has been provided in this packet which may be used to affirm the Permanency Pact made between a youth and supportive adult.

*FosterClub member Caliguy94037,  
age 18, from California*

"I consider permanency to be a life long connection with an adult and consider it very important. In my experiences, I have just met adults that seem to stay in my life and that connection with them helps me to succeed in life."



*Schylar From Montana,  
Fosterclub All-Star*

"I have been through a lot in my life, and sometimes felt as if I were the only one alive in the world even when I was surrounded by lots of people. I am not always sure why I felt this way, maybe because I was a foster kid or maybe because I had always been told I was meant for nothing. But after a life of trials, I found someone that can almost make me forget a lot of the hurt and bad relationships. He is my 6th grade music teacher, my mentor, my savior through 11 placements, and now... my dad. I am 23, and am soon to be adopted your never too old to be adopted."



# 45

## 45 Suggested Supports...

*...that a Supportive Adult might offer  
to a youth transitioning from care*

### ☐ **A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

Spending the holidays without a family and with nowhere to go is a significant issue cited by young people who have transitioned out of foster care. Extending an invitation to holiday celebrations, or birthdays can help a youth fend off the depression that usually sets in around these important times of year.

### ☐ **A PLACE TO DO LAUNDRY**

Many adults can look back at the times they returned home as a youth with bags loaded with dirty clothes to wash. The offer to use laundry facilities can be a great way to keep a regular connection with a youth and provide them with a way to maintain pride in their appearance, regardless of an unstable housing situation.

### ☐ **EMERGENCY PLACE TO STAY**

Statistics show 25% of young persons will spend at least one night homeless within the first 2-4 years of leaving foster care. The offer of an emergency couch to sleep on or a guest bedroom to stay in can reduce anxiety and keep young people safe during hardships. Supportive adults may want to specify limits in time or expectations (help with housework, etc.) as a condition of this offer.

### ☐ **FOOD/OCCASIONAL MEALS**

A friendly, family-style meal every thursday evening or an invitation to Sunday brunch or a monthly lunch can provide a youth with a healthy alternative to the fast-food that often composes a youth's diet. It also provides a chance to connect and to role-model family life. An open invite to "raid the pantry" can be very comforting to young students or those on a limited budget and will help to ensure that the youth's health isn't jeopardized when funds are low.

### ☐ **CARE PACKAGES AT COLLEGE**

Students regularly receive boxes of homemade cookies, a phone card or photos from their parents when away at college. A regular package to a foster youth who has transitioned from care reminds them of connections "back home", and allows them to fit in with their peers.

### ☐ **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

An employer or person in a position to hire, can help by providing special consideration when hiring for a new position. A phone call to the youth inviting them to apply, help with a written application, coaching for a job interview are all ways to help. Supportive adults can offer a youth the chance to help with yard work, housecleaning, babysitting, etc. in order to earn extra money and to establish a work reference.

### ☐ **JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE**

Finding a job can be a daunting task for anyone. Advice, help filling out applications or creating a resumé, rehearsal of interview questions, transportation to interviews, preparation of appropriate clothing, discussion of workplace behavior, and just plain cheering on can help a youth successfully land a job.

### ☐ **CAREER COUNSELING**

An adult working in the youth's field of interest can offer advice which could launch a youth's career. Youth particularly benefit from connections and introductions which lead to apprenticeships, job shadows, or other real-world experience. Supportive adults can help the transitioning youth make these contacts.

### ☐ **HOUSING HUNT**

Securing a first apartment is a rite of passage to adulthood. But without guidance, finding housing can turn into an overwhelming experience. Youth leaving care often lack references or a co-signer which a supportive adult may be able to offer. Former foster youth may have opportunities for financial assistance, but may need help locating it or applying for it. Also, supportive adults can utilize apartment hunting as an opportunity to discuss other daily living challenges, like roommates, utilities, selecting a neighborhood, transportation to job and needed services, etc.

### ☐ **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Extending an invitation to a youth to go bike riding, go bowling, shoot some hoops or to simply take a walk can promote health, relieve anxiety, and provide a comfortable way to connect. Recreational activities like cooking, woodworking, painting or playing guitar can provide an outlet for youth and help to develop skills. Other activities include going to a movie, playing cards or chess or Monopoly, taking photographs, going shopping or taking a short trip.

### ☐ **MENTOR**

Mentors have proven to be an effective influence on youth. Whether a formal or informal mentor to a youth in care, the supportive adult can be a role-model, coach and a friend.

### ☐ **TRANSPORTATION**

Youth often need help with transportation and may have no one to turn to. A supportive adult can be a transportation resource, specifying the limits of the offer, i.e. for school, to find employment, for medical appointments, to visit relatives, etc. Youth can often use help to figure out how to use public transportation.



## □ EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

According to statistics, only 50% of foster youth will graduate from high school. These shocking statistics show that many youth in care struggle through school against terrible odds including multiple moves, learning disabilities, lack of parental support and missed time in class. A supportive adult can help by becoming a tutor, an educational advocate, or by simply providing advice when needed. Youth planning to attend college can use help with college applications, finding financial aid, and visits to perspective college campuses.

## □ RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE/PARENTING COUNSELING

Youth coming out of foster care often lack the skill to cultivate and maintain lasting personal relationships. In many cases, role-modeled relationships for the youth have included biological parents with dysfunctional relationships and paid caretakers from group homes or facilities. Supportive adults can provide frank discussions about relationships, marriage, the role of a spouse and how to be a good parent when the time comes.

## □ ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS/ CHAPERONE

It can be scary attending a medical appointment all alone. A supportive adult can accompany a youth to a medical appointment or rehearse what questions to ask, interpret a doctor's instructions, or provide advice about obtaining a second opinion.

## □ STORAGE

Sometimes the life of a youth can be transient, moving from location to location before getting settled. The supportive adult can provide a safe place to store valuables and help ensure that the youth doesn't lose track of valuables, including photo albums, family keepsakes, and records.

## □ MOTIVATION

Everyone does better with a personal cheering section. The supportive adult may be the only one to offer encouraging words to a youth.

## □ SOMEONE TO TALK TO/DISCUSS PROBLEMS

When a youth transitions out of care, there are often moments of insecurity, loneliness and anxiety. The supportive adult can provide a listening ear for a youth to vent, offer advice and wisdom, or be a sounding board for ideas. It may be wise to establish "calling hours" to avoid late night or early morning calls, if that is a concern.

## □ A PHONE TO USE

Sometimes a phone is simply not an affordable luxury for a youth starting out on their own. A supportive adult could provide use of their phone as a message phone for the youth's prospective employers or landlords. Use of the phone can be helpful to keep in touch with caseworkers, siblings, parents, former foster parents, or to access resources in the community.

## □ A COMPUTER TO USE

Access to a computer is a valuable tool for a youth for school work, employment or housing search, or contact with siblings or other relatives. A supportive adult can provide this access from a computer at work or at home, and may want to establish limits in time, websites visited, or downloads that are acceptable.

## □ CLOTHING

A youth may need assistance and/or advise in purchasing or preparing clothing for events like a job interview, weddings or special occasions, or graduation. Sometimes special opportunities need special gear, like a school ski trip, a costume party, etc. A supportive adult can assist with laundry, ironing, mending, shopping for new clothes, or occasionally purchasing a new item. Improving a youth's personal appearance can boost self confidence.

## □ SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

Youth often develop the same spiritual beliefs as their parents. Youth coming from care may have lacked this spiritual guidance. A supportive adult can invite a youth to join them as they search for their own spiritual path. The adult can offer to explore religion with the youth and invite them to participate in church or other spiritual activities.

## □ LEGAL TROUBLES

A youth emerging from care who gets into legal trouble usually cannot afford legal advice. When youth have a tangle with the law, they often land in deeper trouble because of their lack of experience and resources in navigating the legal system. A supportive adult can assist by connecting youth to needed legal services. The supporter may also wish to provide preventative advice to the youth who may be headed for legal entanglement.



JJ from Michigan,  
FosterClub All-Star

"Permanency is a feeling that is different for everyone, it is not bound by time nor can it be measured. It has to be discovered and often times it has to be tested, and rejected more than once before permanency can be established. Permanency is so hard to understand because it is a conceptual idea of an emotion and is received on both ends very differently for every person. There is no straight "by the book" definition of permanency because the emotions I feel cannot be felt by anyone else, and that's the great thing about it."

## □ CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Supportive adults who share a cultural background with a youth may wish to engage them in cultural activities. Even if the cultural backgrounds are different, the youth can be motivated to participate in cultural events. Support can be given to examine cultural traditions and beliefs and encouragement given to take pride in their cultural identity.

## □ APARTMENT MOVE-IN

Moving is so much easier with the support of friends, from packing, to manpower, a truck to move, to help setting up the new apartment. The supportive adult can also invite the youth to scout through their garage or storage area for extra furniture or household items that might be useful.

#### ☐ **COOKING LESSONS/ASSISTANCE**

Many times youth coming out of care have not had the opportunity to practice cooking on their own. Meal preparation is often a natural way to engage in meaningful conversation and build a relationship. The supportive adult may decide to take a youth grocery shopping, or help stock the youth's first kitchen with a starter supply of utensils, spices, cleaning supplies and food.

#### ☐ **REGULAR CHECK-IN (DAILY, WEEKLY OR MONTHLY)**

Simply knowing that someone will be aware that you are missing, hurt or in trouble is important. A supportive adult can instigate regular check-in's with a youth transitioning out of care, easing feelings of anxiety and building confidence that someone is concerned about their safety.

#### ☐ **BILLS AND MONEY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE**

Sorting through bills and balancing a checkbook can be a particularly daunting task for a youth with a learning disability, deficient math skills or experience. Understanding how to maintain and obtain credit, deciphering loan applications, and budgeting are some of the items where a supportive adult can lend help.

#### ☐ **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION HELP**

A high percentage of youth in care have parents who had drug or alcohol dependency problems. Working with young people transitioning out of care to avoid these dangerous pitfalls and offering support if a problem should develop could help break a familial cycle of addiction.



*Sharde from Indiana, FosterClub All-Star*

"Permanency is important because if you spend your entire life moving around it doesn't give you a chance to get close to anyone, and you don't learn how to build those essential relationships you will need later in life. Moving around also influences you to run away from your problems."

#### ☐ **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

Some youth in care suffer from mental health challenges. Depression, attention-deficit disorder, eating disorders, and other illness may afflict the youth. It is suggested that the supportive adult educate themselves about any mental health disorders that are at issue.

#### ☐ **CO-SIGNER**

Many times youth need co-signers to acquire housing, car loans, or bank accounts (particularly when the youth is under 18 years old). Consider the financial liability if the youth were to miss payments or not fulfill the financial agreement. It is suggested that an adult who acts as a co-signer closely supervise the arrangement until the youth has established a consistent pattern of responsibility.

#### ☐ **HELP WITH READING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, AND COMPLEX MAIL**

Many youth in care have learning disabilities which may make complicated reading assignments all the more difficult. The supportive adult can make arrangements for a youth to collect materials for review on a weekly basis or to give a call on an as-needed basis.

#### ☐ **MECHANICAL AND/OR BUILDING PROJECTS**

Youth may need help keeping an automobile in good repair. Teaching a youth about the care of their car can help them build self-confidence and skills that can last a lifetime. Helping a youth fix up their apartment or a rented home, or asking for their assistance in projects around your home, can teach new skills which may be put to use throughout life.

#### ☐ **HOUSEKEEPING**

Some youth, particularly those who have lived in a residential facility or restrictive environment, may not have had real-life experience in keeping a home clean. The supportive adult can discuss cleaning supplies to use for particular household chores, how to avoid disease, and organization of clutter once a youth has transitioned to their own home.

#### ☐ **HOME DECORATING**

Helping a youth decorate their home can be a fun and rewarding way to contribute to the youth's sense of pride and self esteem.

#### ☐ **VOTING**

Youth in our society often form their first political impressions based on their parents' political beliefs. Youth in care often do not receive this role modeling. A supportive adult may wish to discuss current local, state and national issues, help a youth register to vote or take a youth to the polling location to vote.

#### ☐ **VOLUNTEERISM**

Volunteering to help others or for a worthy cause is an excellent way to build self-esteem. Supporters can offer to engage a youth in their own good work or embark on a new volunteer effort together.

#### ☐ **FINDING COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Navigating through the maze of government agencies and myriad of social service programs is difficult at best even for a resourceful adult. The supportive adult can help the youth make a list of useful resources in the community and offer to visit them together.

#### ☐ **SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY**

The youth transitioning from care needs to take charge of their own personal safety. The supportive adult can encourage them to take a self-defense class, get CPR certified, get current on health and safety issues. The adult can take a tour of the youth's apartment and make suggestions regarding home safety, can help develop an evacuation plan, and make plans with the youth on what to do in an emergency situation. The supportive adult can offer to be called when something goes wrong, and offer to be listed as "person to contact in an emergency" on business forms.



#### ❑ **BABYSITTING**

If the youth is a parent, babysitting services can be the relief that is needed to keep a young family intact. In addition to providing a time-out, the offer to watch a child while the young parent gets other chores around the house accomplished (laundry, cleaning, etc.), provides an excellent opportunity to role-model good parenting skills.

#### ❑ **EMERGENCY CASH**

Most of us have experienced a cash shortage at one time or another as a youth. Youth coming from care usually lack this important “safety net”. The supportive adult may wish to discuss up front their comfort level in supplying financial assistance. They would discuss what constitutes an emergency (not enough to cover rent? a medical emergency? cash for a date? gas money?).

#### ❑ **REFERENCE**

Many applications, including those for college, housing and jobs, require a list of references be provided by the applicant. If the supportive adult is able to give a positive reference for a youth, they should make sure a youth has their current contact information so that the supporter can be included on their list of references.

#### ❑ **ADVOCACY**

Sometimes youth have a difficult time speaking up for themselves in court, at school, with government systems, etc. Supportive adults can help a youth organize their thoughts, speak on their behalf, or assist in writing letters.

#### ❑ **INCLUSION IN SOCIAL CIRCLE/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Often youth in care have difficulty forming new friendships and relationships when they leave care. A supportive adult can extend regular invitations to the youth to attend social and community gatherings as an opportunity to form new friendships and make connections with people. Good opportunities to make new friends include family weddings, hiking trips, garden clubs, community service projects and volunteer opportunities, dances, sporting events, debate groups, community college classes, etc.

#### ❑ **ADOPTION**

Even for many older youth, including those over the age of 18, adoption remains a dream. An adult who is able to offer this ultimate permanent connection for a youth may make an initial offer to adopt through a Permanency Pact. Often youth may have fears about adoption, interpreting adoption to mean loss of contact with bio parents or siblings (this should be taken into consideration when discussing this option). Youth who once declined to be adopted often change their minds, so an adult may want to renew the offer from time to time.

## About FosterClub



*FosterClub is the national network  
for young people in foster care.*

**Every 2 minutes**, a child's life changes as they enter the foster care system. There are more than 513,000 young people living in foster care across the country, and FosterClub *is their club* — a place to turn for advice, information, and hope. Our peer support network gives kids in foster care **a new spin on life**.

At FosterClub's **web sites**, kids are asking questions and getting answers: [www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com) is for young people and [www.fyi3.com](http://www.fyi3.com) is designed for youth transitioning from care. FosterClub's gateway for adults who support young people in foster care is [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org). Our **publications** supply youth with tools for success and also provide inspiration and perspective from their peers who have successfully emerged from foster care. FosterClub's **training and events** are held across the country and feature a dynamic group of young foster care alumni called the FosterClub All-Stars. **Outreach tools** designed to improve communication with young people in care and engage them in achieving their own personal success.

The members of FosterClub are resilient young people determined to build a better future for themselves and for other kids coming up through the system behind them. Their success depends on the generosity of concerned individuals and collaborations with partner organizations. If you would like to learn more about FosterClub or how you can support young people in foster care, visit [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org) or call 503-717-1552. FosterClub is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. EIN 93-1287234.



The pinwheel is an enduring symbol of the happy, carefree childhood all kids deserve. For more than 513,000 youth living in the U.S. foster care system, childhood has been interrupted by abuse, neglect or abandonment. FosterClub's peer support network gives kids in foster care a new spin on life by providing information, resources, encouragement and hope.

*the national network for young people in foster care*

FOSTERCLUB

Permanency Pact © 2006 FosterClub, Inc. 503-717-1552 or [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org).  
Permission to copy and distribute is granted as long as this document remains entirely intact and is not altered.





# PERMANENCY PACT

In an effort to substantiate and sustain  
an on-going connection between a youth and a supportive adult,

S U P P O R T I V E   A D U L T

pledges to provide specific support to, and has been accepted as a  
provider of such support by,

Y O U T H

confirmed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY MONTH YEAR

as witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_  
F A C I L I T A T O R

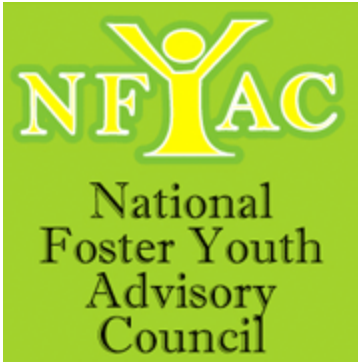


*FosterClub's Permanency Pact documents a  
life-long, kin-like commitment to a relationship  
between a youth and a supportive adult.*

the national network for young people in foster care | [www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)

- ☐ A Home For The Holidays
- ☐ A Place To Do Laundry
- ☐ Emergency Place To Stay
- ☐ Food/Occasional Meals
- ☐ Care Packages At College
- ☐ Employment Opportunity
- ☐ Job Search Assistance
- ☐ Career Counseling
- ☐ Housing Hunt
- ☐ Recreational Activities
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Educational Assistance
- ☐ Relationship/Marriage/Parenting
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Assistance With Medical Appts
- ☐ Storage
- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Someone To Talk To/Discuss Problems
- ☐ A Phone To Use
- ☐ A Computer To Use
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Spiritual Support
- ☐ Legal Troubles
- ☐ Cultural Experience
- ☐ Apartment Move-in
- ☐ Cooking Lessons/Assistance
- ☐ Regular Check-in
- ☐ Bills & Money Management Assistance
- ☐ Drug And Alcohol Addiction Help
- ☐ Mental Health Support
- ☐ Co-Signer
- ☐ Help Reading Forms, Complex Docs
- ☐ Mechanical/Building Projects
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Home Decorating
- ☐ Voting
- ☐ Volunteerism
- ☐ Finding Community Resources
- ☐ Safety And Personal Security
- ☐ Babysitting
- ☐ Emergency Cash
- ☐ Social Circle/Community Activities
- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ Reference
- ☐ Adoption
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_





## National Foster Youth Advisory Council's Top 10 Recommendations for Ensuring Every Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Has a Place to Call Home

<http://www.cwla.org/programs/positiveyouth/nfyac.htm>

### **Work with me to develop an effective transition plan.**

Case managers and social workers need to work in partnership with young people preparing to "age out" to develop a solid, effective discharge plan to help youth to successfully transition out of foster care. This includes securing housing, developing a budget, and teaching the life skills necessary to live on your own. One NFYAC member said he felt like he had half of a plan - "The plan was to get housing however, the part that was missing was where and how." Another NFYAC member indicated that he only had a "plan on paper" but nothing else to prepare him to exit the system. Many NFYAC members identified college as their housing plan. Unfortunately, college housing is not an option for all foster youth. Young people in foster care need to participate in independent living programs that will ensure that they are receiving adequate life skills necessary to become thriving adults. Social workers and case managers must address housing in each youth's discharge plan in order to ensure stability upon discharge. Child welfare workers need to be aware of housing resources available in the community. Discharge to homelessness or precarious housing is NEVER an option. *No foster youth should leave the foster care system without a solid, effective transition plan.*

### **Provide me with a permanent connection.**

Unlike their peers, many young people in foster care lack social and familial connections. Young people in foster care need to experience a sense of stability - they need to have someone to rely on. Foster youth are resilient, with many strengths and assets. Just like their peers, they often need someone to nurture these gifts and provide them with opportunities that prepare them to serve in their own communities. The potential of these young people is limitless, but they require nurturing and supportive connections from others. Almost all of the NFYAC members said that they would have liked to have someone to call when they had a question about some "real" life issue. Unfortunately, young people leaving the system do not always have a strong support network. Therefore, it is important that these young people have a permanent connection that will teach and assist them in accessing information and resources in their community in case a crisis arises. *No foster youth should not leave the foster care system without permanent connections.*

### **Provide me with the opportunities to practice living on my own.**

Young people in foster care need to be given the opportunity to practice life skills before actually living on their own. Youth can be provided these opportunities through

various living arrangements such as scattered site apartments, supervised apartments, group homes, and subsidized housing. These housing options provide youth with hands-on experiences while still in foster care. Like their peers, not all young people in foster care have the skills sets necessary to live on their own when exiting the system. NFYAC members indicated that young people need to learn how to live on their own before actually having to do it. Many Council members said that they did not know enough about the realities of adulthood including information about credit, security deposits and lease agreements when they left the system. *No foster youth should leave the foster care system without this knowledge.*

#### **Make sure I know about my finances.**

Foster youth need to be financially literate prior to discharge. Youth need to know how to open a checking account, balance a checkbook, pay their bills and save money. Foster youth need to learn how to be economically savvy by asking themselves, “what is the best bargain or do I really need this or do I just want it?” These young people also need to understand and know how to protect their credit and how bad credit can influence their future. NFYAC members shared how family members tried to use their name to open accounts, which negatively impacted their credit. Youth need to be aware of issues such as stolen identities and predatory lending. It is unfair to expect a foster youth to develop these skills without giving him or her the knowledge and opportunity to practice with supervision. No foster youth should leave the foster care system without being financially literate.

#### **Let me know my options.**

Young people in foster care have the right to know that there are programs, policies, community resources and federal funding streams available to support housing outcomes. For example, States can use up to 30% of Chafee funds for room and board to youth 18 to 21 years of age. Foster youth often do not have the information that they need to navigate the system. Young people need to know that they have access to Chafee funds, which include financial assistance for housing and education services. One NFYAC member says, “young people who have the information are the ones who are fighting to be successful.” *No foster youth should exit the system without knowledge about the funding that is intended to help them successfully transition into adulthood.*

#### **Level the playing field for young people leaving foster care.**

The average 18 year old does not have to worry about where he or she is going to live or how much money will he or she have to earn to make this month’s rent. In fact, according to the 2000 Census, 4 million people between the ages of 25 and 34 lived with their parents due to economic realities. Unfortunately, many young people in foster care do not have the option of turning to their families for emotional, financial or housing supports. Instead, they have to figure out how to make ends meet on their own. Foster youth need to be afforded the same supports and opportunities as their peers without the added pressure of trying to make ends meet in tough economic times. According to one NFYAC member, having a safe and stable place to live decreases a foster youth’s stress and instead, gives him or her the opportunity to focus on creating a stable home environment. *No foster youth should have to worry about where he or she is going to sleep tonight.*

### **Don't put me in a position to make poor choices.**

Unfortunately, foster youth are often forced into a position to make poor choices. One NFYAC member shared that his state discharges youth at 19 or when you complete high school. He chose to delay graduation so that he would not be discharged earlier. Former foster youth are often forced into situations that put them at-risk due to the lack of policies and practices that support the positive and healthy development of young people in foster care. *No foster youth should be forced to make poor choices.*

### **Teach me the skills to appropriately deal with my biological family.**

Due to a lack of housing options, foster youth frequently return to their biological families after aging out of the foster care system. Unfortunately, many times they are not adequately prepared to deal with their biological families, which often result in disappointment. Foster youth need to feel connected and often, they return to their families seeking not only housing but also a sense of stability and connection. Several NFYAC members indicated that they returned to their biological families after leaving foster care because they had nowhere else to go. Foster youth need to know how to set boundaries and develop relationships with their biological families on their terms. *No youth should leave foster care ill prepared to confront issues related to their biological families.*

### **Advocate on our behalf.**

Every young person needs someone on his or her side. Unfortunately, foster youth are often overlooked. Foster youth deserve someone advocating on his or her behalf. "No one wants to take a chance with you" one Council member says. Foster youth need someone advocating on their behalf whether it is to get into an apartment with no rental or credit history or lobbying to Congress to ensure safe, stable and affordable housing for youth aging out of foster care. *No foster youth should ever feel like nobody is on their side.*

### **It's all connected.**

Youth aging out of the foster care system are significantly impacted by long periods of out of home placements. The life events of these former foster youth place them at an increased risk for experiencing adversity. Therefore, it is important to provide these young people with the supports, resources and permanent connections to obtain higher education, stable employment, medical insurance and safe, stable and affordable housing. If a young person does not have an adequate job, he or she cannot afford housing. And if a young person is employed without insurance or benefits, he or she may be putting their job and housing at risk if they become sick. Like others, many facets of a youth's life are connected, making it even more important to support ALL areas of a young person's life before they are discharged from foster care. *No foster youth should be discharged from foster care without access to higher education, employment, medical insurance, safe, stable and affordable housing and a permanent connection.*

# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 5, 2010

For more information, contact:  
Dale Ellis, (501) 683-2078  
Dale.Ellis@adhe.edu

## **Universal Application, Online Tools to Better Match Arkansas Students to Scholarships**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas citizens seeking education beyond high school will now find the scholarship application process more user-friendly than ever before, thanks to the Universal Scholarship Application, developed by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The online version of the Universal Scholarship Application, launched on January 1, matches students to potential scholarships in a matter of minutes.

“This application will make it easier for Arkansans to find the financial aid they need to obtain a degree,” Governor Mike Beebe said. “Inadequate financial resources prevent many Arkansans from finishing college. This application will help remove some of those obstacles and give our people a better shot at completing higher-education programs.”

By answering a few simple questions about age, grade-point average, ACT or SAT scores, and income level, applicants will be matched with the financial-aid programs they may qualify for, along with an estimated amount of financial aid they might expect in an academic year.

“Once that is done, the student goes through a few more steps to create an account, and this one application can be submitted to the ADHE Financial Aid Division to start the process,” said Dr. Jim Purcell, director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. “The student can then log into his or her account to check the status of the application. A lot of work has gone into the development of this software application, and we’re proud to say that we have greatly simplified what was a pretty complicated process.”

In early 2009, Gov. Beebe directed ADHE to put into place a simplified system for financial-aid applications, removing the barriers presented by a complex system of paperwork that placed the responsibility on the student in calculating the financial-aid programs that suited them best. Several months of work ensued, as ADHE worked with Information Systems of Arkansas to create a secure and simple application process.

“This is the result,” said ADHE Financial Aid Coordinator Tara Smith. “From the perspective of the student, we’ve ended the paper chase and put into place an uncomplicated process that gives all students greater access to the money available to send them to college.”

-more-

Students can access the Web application by logging onto [www.adhe.edu](http://www.adhe.edu) and clicking on the YOUNiversal Arkansas Financial Aid System link on the left side of the page.

“From that point, the process is very user-friendly and makes applying for financial aid easier than ever before,” said Dr. Purcell. “This is truly a giant step in Gov. Beebe’s and the department’s goal of making higher education more accessible to more Arkansans.”

ADHE has also been working with the Arkansas Department of Education, Department of Workforce Services, and the State Library System to make computers available at high schools, libraries, and workforce centers for those who do not have internet access. A paper application is also being developed to assist those with limited computer skills or access in finding the financial aid they may qualify for.

For more information about the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, visit [www.adhe.edu](http://www.adhe.edu) or call (800) 54STUDY.

# Transition Living CHRIS Tip Sheet

## General client information:

- Updated email address on all clients 16 years and up. (Path: Workload/Client/Gen Info./Client Information Tab)
- Updated education information. I.e. ACT test date and score, Special Education Needs, Advanced Placement, Youth Advisory Board Member, Useful links etc.... (Path: Workload/Client/Gen. Info./Education Tab)
- Updated medical information. I.e. Medicines that the child is taking, visits to Family Physicians, Dentist, Orthodontist, Dermatologist, Ophthalmologist, Counseling, etc... (Path: Workload/Client/Meds or Med. Visits)
- Driver's License information and insurance coverage history (Path: Workload/Client/Driver's Lic.)

## Contact Screen (Path: Workload/Services/Contacts)

- One of three purposes should be used when documenting contacts pertaining to Transitional Youth Services.
  - Transitional Service
  - Transitional Skills Class
  - Transitional Team Meeting
- Mandatory Transitional Services Category Select Box must be completed when one of the three Transitional purposes is selected.
  - There are 18 Transitional Services Category Values (see attached Transitional Services Category Values List)
- DCFS needs to capture the number and types of Transitional Services offered and the number and types of Transitional Services completed. For you, this means you will need to do one contact to show completed Transitional Services (Completed status) and a separate contact for Transitional Services that were offered but not completed (Attempted status) and to whom they were offered. If the contact status is 'Attempted' the service(s) will not populate to the new IL Services screen.
- Documented Transitional Services should correspond with Case Plan goals.

## IL button (Path: Workload/Services/IL)

### IL Checklist Screen

- Have a current Life Skills Assessment Completed
  - Document in Comments field the score of the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment. Scores should be documented every six months when the child retakes the assessment.
  - COR Element 26 pulls from this screen for children in Foster Care age 16 and older to ensure that there is a current Life Skills Assessment completed.

## IL Services

- Summary of all Transitional Services documented on contact screen.
- IL Services can be printed out to attach to other reports.

## **Youth Transition Plan** (Path: Workload/Case Plan/Plan/Needs/Svcs)

Every 17 year old youth in foster care must be included in developing a plan to transition into adulthood. Therefore, the seventeen year old foster youth must have a completed Transition Plan within the Case Plan before the overall Case Plan can be approved.

- The Youth Transition Plan can be printed separate from the Case Plan.
- The primary worker will get a Transition Plan for Foster Youth Tickler on any child in foster care thirty days before their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. The tickler will automatically be removed when the youth's Transition Plan is completed.

## **NYTD button**

- Show NYTD Info button – Used to show if all required NYTD elements are available and what data needs to still be documented in CHRIS.
- Take NYTD Web Survey – the first NYTD baseline cohort to take the survey will be clients that will have his/her 17th birthday between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011. These clients need to complete the survey between their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and 45 days after. They cannot complete it if they wait over 45 days from their 17<sup>th</sup> birth date.

## Guidelines for Structuring Transitional Life Plan Team meeting

- I. Welcome (Set the tone) and Introduction
  - a. Thank everyone for coming
  - b. Clear statement of the purpose of the meeting
  - c. Youth-centered approach
  - d. Positive statement about youth
  - e. Request youth to identify people in the room and then each person can introduce him/herself (have name tents)
  - f. Each person present should be ready to make a positive statement regarding the youth
  - g. Orientation to the meeting location, if needed
  - h. Review the process (or flow) of the meeting
  - i. Guidelines for the discussion
- II. Information Gathering and Sharing
  - a. Brainstorming begins
  - b. Maintain focus on present and near future (1-3-6 months)
  - c. Maintain positive tone of staffing (meeting)
  - d. Ensure that topics are discussed thoroughly
- III. Documenting the Plan
  - a. Capture the information from the brainstorming into the categories of the Transitional Life Plan and Agreement
  - b. Notes on topics that need to be addressed further in future meetings
  - c. Maintain focus on the present and near future (1-3-6) months
  - d. Remember that the plan is subject to change
  - e. Agree on tasks and timeframes
- IV. Closing the Staffing (Meeting)
  - a. Review the specifics of the plan (Who, What, When, Where, How)
  - b. Discuss follow-up details (who will check in with whom about progress)
  - c. Meeting planner and/or Life Plan with own tasks
  - d. Distribution of the plan?
  - e. Collect feedback from those present about the staffing
  - f. Thank everyone for coming
- V. Monitoring and Follow-up
  - a. Set up mechanism and time table to check in with team members to follow-up
  - b. Immediately document team meeting results



## WHAT DO YOU DO?

The following situations happen during a Transitional Team meeting. What are some strategies to handle these situations?

1. One person keeps “hogging” the meeting agenda. He or she has a comment or opinion about every single item.
2. Someone changes the subject before the item being discussed has been fully dealt with.
3. You are behind schedule and the group cannot seem to move off a certain agenda item.
4. Participants are directing all comments back to you (the leader) and not really talking to each other.
5. Participants are talking about the youth to each other in the third person rather than directly to the youth, e.g., He is not doing his homework.
6. Some participant keep responding with “Yes, but...”
7. The meeting is going on for a long time and participants are tired and beginning to get grumpy.
8. Someone raises an issue that is going to be addressed later in the meeting.
9. Your supervisor disagrees with your summary of an item that has just been discussed.
10. The attorney ad litem (or some other attendee with whom you have to continue to work) frequently interrupts you during the meeting.
11. One attendee seems to be particularly condescending toward the youth.
12. Despite numerous attempts, one attendee will not contribute.

## Scenario for Transitional Life Plan Team Meeting

### Ben

Ben has been in foster care since he was 12 as a result of neglect. He is 16 now. He has an older sister, Jill, who was 16 at the time of removal. She is 20 now. Ben and Jill were very close and depended on each other until they were separated when they came into foster care. Ben and Jill saw each other on and off over the years while in foster care, but have not had regular contact in the last 2 years. They both say they still feel close to each other.

Jill remained in foster care after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to continue to receive assistance under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. She was not adopted but has a stable life connection from the last foster home she lived in. She is going to college and is doing fairly well. She plans to finish college, get a job, and has said she wants to adopt Ben.

Ben's and Jill's parents' rights have been terminated. Previous caseworkers have contacted relatives and two different relatives were identified as potential placement resources. For one relative, the home study was not favorable and placement was not recommended. A home study was never completed on the other relative due to lack of response from the relative during the process.

Ben has behavioral problems and struggles with schoolwork. He has been in six foster placements in the last five years, including four foster homes and two different group homes. He is currently living in a group home. He seems to be fairly stable in his current setting. He has said he wants to "work on computers" when he grows up.